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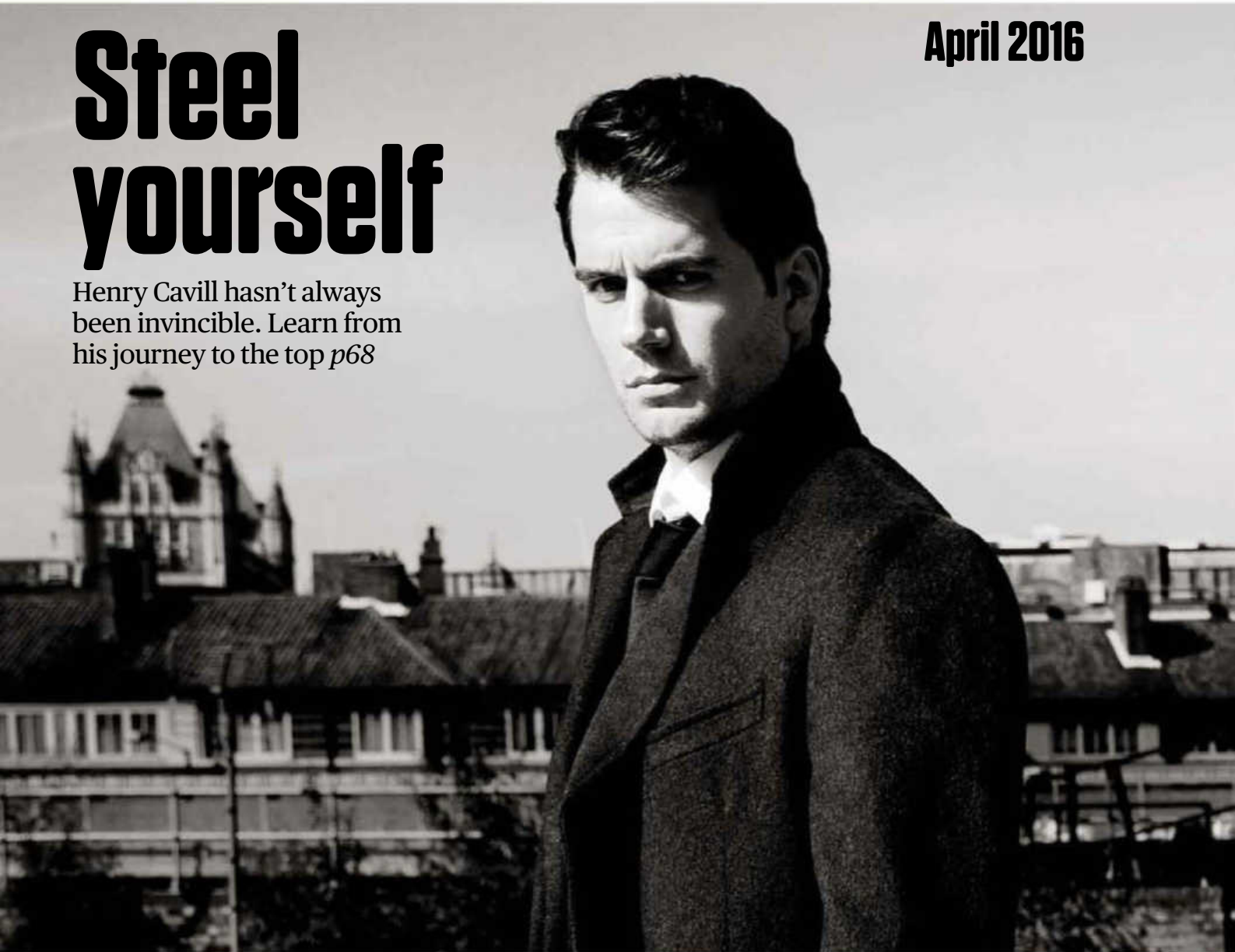
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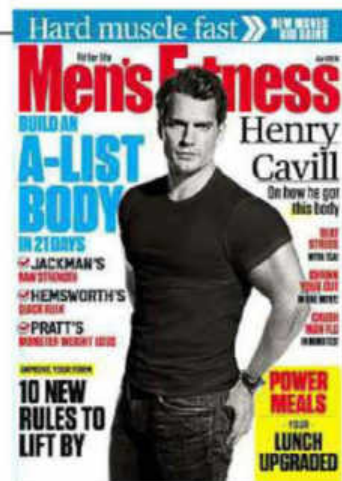
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The comedian and movie star is on a mission to bring people together all around the world using the power of fitness. *MF* finds out more

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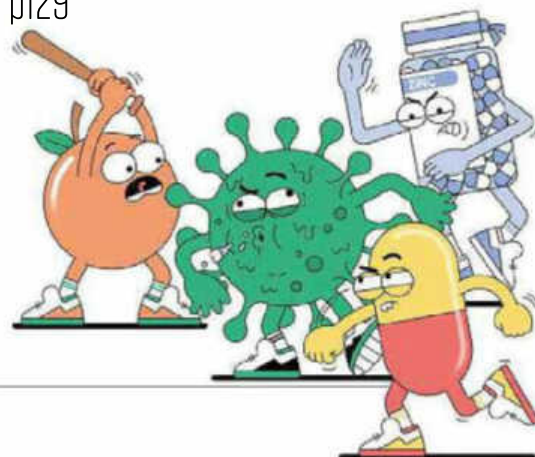


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Q: What's your superpower?



I'd like to believe that each of us has some sort of extra special power - that one thing that sets us apart, if not from the rest of the human race, then at least from the other people in our office. Obviously I'm not talking about invisibility, X-ray vision or adamantium claws (think of the accidental upholstery damage) but something we're just really bloody good at. And whatever it is, you can bet it's not the result of a cheeky spider bite or genetic dabbling by sinister government officials - it's all thanks to hard work and discipline.

That's my biggest take-away from our superhero special this issue. While the fictional heroes have largely gained their amazing powers and similarly amazing bodies from a combination of industrial accidents and DNA mutations, the very real actors who play them have built their heroic physiques the old-fashioned way: brutal training, strict-verging-on-bonkers diets and pure dedication. And they've done this on top of the small matter of working their way to the top of the Hollywood tree to become bona fide A-list movie stars.

We hope their fitness journeys inspire yours - and remember, cape and mask are optional. Well, they are at the gym we go to.

Joe Barnes, Editor

 @MF_Barnes

IN THIS ISSUE

We asked three of our experts: what would your superpower be?



Matt Maynard

Outdoor journalist and ultrarunner (p78)

"I love long training sessions in the Andes mountains near my home. My superpower would be to magic my favourite training foods out of the air to keep me going."



James Potter

Creator of our Hybrid Training plan (p131)

"I would chose the ability to recover from training sessions instantly so I could train two or three times a day every day. I love being in the gym and putting the work in, and it's my body rather than my mindset that keeps me from training even harder."



Dan Wheeler

Body transformation specialist (p107)

"I'd like to be Empower-Man, giving people the confidence to chase after their own goals."

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THE MFERS

The staff and readers of *Men's Fitness* are always in the thick of the action



Max, head of digital content
#MoveWithHart

Over 1,000 people joined stand-up comic and *Ride Along* star Kevin Hart for an early morning 5K run around Battersea Park. He told *MF* about working with Nike to get people moving - and why he thinks there's an athlete in all of us (though probably not a basketball player in him). Read the interview on p45.



Sophie, intern
#redmonday

A Monday HIIT session with Joe Wicks is one way to blow away the cobwebs - and *MF*'s Man of the Year didn't go easy on us with his new Fitness First class. I couldn't finish it, but fellow intern Dale fared worse, earning the nickname "Sicknote". He blamed a heavy weekend, naturally...



Matt, features writer
#MFTBT

After Christmas I realised I'd built up some extra timber. Lucky for me *Men's Fitness* has launched an 80-day body transformation plan, so I've volunteered to test it. I'm enjoying the workouts, which are all short enough to dust off in a lunch hour. Sign up for your tailored plan at tbt.mensfitness.co.uk.



Ben, deputy editor
#getagrip

Having signed up for the obstacle course race *Toughest*, I've been working on improving my grip strength (and all-round ninja skills) with lots of pull-up variations, monkey bar traverses and farmer's walks at the gym. Find out more at toughest.se.

Issue 190 April 2016
Men's Fitness



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Q I'm keen to make sure my child is active as young as possible. Are there any drawbacks to this?

Giuseppe, North Yorkshire

Provided you're not trying to get a two-year-old benching 100kg, it's a very good thing. The biggest benefit may surprise you, though. A team at the University of Colorado found that exercising at an early age can permanently alter the state of microbes in your stomach for the better, promoting healthier brain and metabolic activity over a lifetime. They didn't establish an exact age to start, but the findings suggested the earlier the better.

Q I'm overweight and this year I've been exercising to slim down, but nothing's shifting yet. Am I not working hard enough?

Karl, Lancashire

It might not be easy to hear, but new Anglo-Japanese research has found that the more fat your body has, the more it resists burning it off. The study found that the amount of a protein called sLR11 in the blood correlated with the person's total fat mass. This protein suppresses the process of turning fat cells into energy, so the more you have, the harder it is to lose weight. Remember, while exercise is important - upping the intensity and reducing rest periods should help - diet is key, so make sure you're eating lots of veg and cut out foods with added sugar.

Q I can't resist a midnight snack sometimes. I stick to healthy food so it can't be that bad - right?

Kieran, Exeter

The "no carbs after 6pm" rule may have been debunked, but there's still bad news for midnight snackers - whatever they eat. A UCLA study suggested abnormal eating patterns could impair the brain's hippocampus, which manages emotions and memory. The upshot? Try not to eat round the clock - if not for your belly, for your brain.



Q I can't always get out on my bike for a proper ride. Will going to a spin class instead help make me a better cyclist?

Dean, High Wycombe

Well, yes and - have you guessed what's coming? - no. "Spin classes do work the key cycling muscles, and the intense effort will help your pedalling power," says *Cyclist* magazine's Peter Stuart. "But essentially it's a general fitness workout. If you really want to become a better cyclist, you'll need to swap those intense short sessions for longer efforts, which are key to improving the endurance you'll need." In other words, you need to put the miles in.



Previous issue's issues

Q In your recent Fitness Exam feature, you said the pull-up is the best move for rectus abdominis activation. Surely it's the abs wheel roll-out! Can you show your working?

Reinder, the Netherlands

This came from research by Bret Contreras, who used an electromyography (EMG) machine to measure muscle activation in more than 50 moves and the pull-up came top. He says bracing your back to keep a straight line from shoulder to knee forces your core to work hard. The roll-out was best for working your internal obliques.

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Music makes you HIIT harder

We've long known that music boosts running performance - by up to 15% according to a 2012 study - now scientists have looked into how it affects high-intensity interval training. The results? Listen up.

McMaster University in Canada found 20 people who'd never done a HIIT workout, and asked them to do sessions on exercise bikes. "People who listened to self-selected music during HIIT not only enjoyed the exercise more, they also worked harder," says study author Mark Stork. On top of that, none of them considered the workout where they went harder any more demanding.

The Bottom Line It's important to note that the participants listened to their favourite tunes. Pumping out Little Mix won't have the same effect - or at it least shouldn't...

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A mask will give your diaphragm a good workout - if that's what you want

Do training masks really work?

We watched Apollo's son using one on the treadmill in Creed - but does science agree with Rocky Balboa's coaching?

Wearing a mask when training supposedly limits air intake to mimic the effects of altitude, building lung capacity and VO_2 max (the maximum amount of oxygen your body can use during intense exercise). That's what the manufacturers claim, anyway, but the most recent experiment - done on American army cadets - found no significant improvements to anaerobic capacity, peak power, VO_2 max or time to exhaustion over an eight-week period. It concluded the main effect was to make the lungs and diaphragm work harder to get more air.

"There's only one surefire way to improve oxygen uptake for any given activity," says exercise physiology expert Chris Toms. "The more you cycle, the better your oxygen delivery will be on the bike. The more you swim, the better it'll be in the pool, and so on." For additional fat burning and cardio benefits, go to an altitude chamber (currently only in a few London locations, but Virgin Active plans to build more this year) to train with reduced oxygen, rather than just reduced airflow.

The Bottom Line Strengthen your diaphragm and lungs by just breathing through your nose while exercising. It's free, and equally if not more effective. Sorry, Rocky.

Slow down, live longer



The number of people with diabetes in Britain has crept over the four million mark, putting it at an all-time high. Type 2 is generally associated with lifestyle, particularly dietary choices - but just because you aren't mainlining cakes and fizzy pop, don't think you're immune. A four-year Chinese study found anyone with an average heart rate of 88bpm or higher is 73% more likely to develop the condition.

The good news? Regular exercise slows it over time. The even better news? Research published in the *British Journal Of Sports Medicine* found three 33-minute high-intensity interval sessions a week can lower it by 13% in just eight weeks.

Beat matching

How does your ticker compare to these benchmarks?

72bpm

Average UK male

40bpm

Endurance athlete

27bpm

Lowest recorded

Race Right

Whether marathon training or considering your first 5K, use new science to cross the line with confidence

Stretch yourself

Pre-race dynamic movements such as high knees and heel flicks don't just reduce your chances of a post-race limp. The *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research* says it also helps you run "significantly further before exhaustion".

Stick with girls

Us overeager blokes aren't as good as pacing ourselves as women, according to another study from the same journal. Tail a lady going at your target speed to stay on track for that PB. (Eyes up, please.)

Stop bounding

Around 31% of runners get pre-race injuries. Scandinavian researchers found shrinking stride length by 10% correlates to a dramatic drop in that figure. Reduce yours by listening to 180bpm music and synching your steps to the beat.

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Grasshoppers contain more protein, less fat and fewer carbs than peanut butter

Mealworms, beetle larvae and grasshoppers have all been championed as sustainable protein sources that could stop farmed livestock obliterating the planet's resources. And now a Dutch research team has found out they're also a good source of healthy fatty acids.

"All the oils smell different... some nicer than others," says Daylan Tzompa Sosa, lead author of the study published in *Food Research International*. They're not yet cleared for human consumption, but could be on shelves later this year - let's hope they sort the pong out first.

In the meantime, you can buy environmentally friendly insect protein as a powder for shakes (smashit.co.uk), smooshed up in bars (chapul.com), or whole (thefarmedinsectcompany.com) for Blumenthal levels of culinary invention. Creepy crawlies have a nutty tang, apparently.

Munch insects, save the world

The next big thing?

This month: sirt foods

The latest developments in nutrition - explained

This year's health fad front-runner is here. It's bagged a skinny celeb advocate in Jodie Kidd, while boxer Anthony Ogogo and rugby star James Haskell are also supporters. What's the deal?

"Sirt foods activate sirtuin genes - the same ones that are stimulated by exercise - clearing cellular waste and burning fat," says Aidan Goggins, co-author of *The Sirt Food Diet*. "A large-scale, independent 2013 study showed they reduce heart disease, diabetes, inflammation and obesity risk, as well as improving brain function."

"It's hard to criticise," says dietitian Priya Tew

(dietitianuk.com). "The top sirt foods [listed right] appear on most healthy food lists and have plenty of benefits aside from their sirtuin-activating properties. However, it's wise to remember that alcohol is still a toxin, even in delicious red wine. My advice? Eat a wide variety of plant-based foods to get as much good stuff as possible, sirtuin friendly or not."

The slight catch? The full list can currently only be found in the *Sirt Food Diet* book.

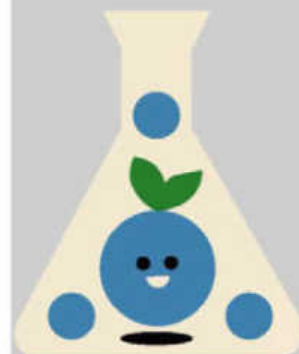
Top 10 sirt foods

- Green tea
- Dark chocolate
- Turmeric
- Kale
- Blueberries
- Parsley
- Capers
- Citrus fruits
- Apples
- Red wine

The Bottom Line It's not a miracle diet, but sirt foods contain lots of healthy compounds on top of their gene-manipulating trickery, so you can't go wrong by eating more.

Reason to eat more protein #657

It builds and repairs muscle, but you already knew that. Now, a study in the *Journal Of The International Society Of Sports Nutrition* suggests it strips flab too - a lot of it. Two groups did two upper-body and two lower-body sessions a week. The one on a high-protein diet (3g per kilo of bodyweight each day) dropped three times as much fat over eight weeks.



The future could be sweeter

An enzyme that could make sugar less unhealthy has been identified by the University of Montreal. "By diverting glucose as glycerol, G3PP prevents excessive formation and storage of fat," says diabetes researcher Dr Murthy Madiraju. It's the first new metabolic enzyme discovered since the 1960s, but don't start the cookie binge just yet - clinical trials are still needed. In the meantime, satisfy your sweet tooth with natural alternatives to refined sugar, such as honey and agave nectar.

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Man up like Adam Walker

A lesson in toughness from the ex-toaster salesman who became the first British swimmer to complete the Ocean's Seven challenge*

Dream big, start small

"I hadn't swum in eight years, and then I saw a movie about a guy who loses his job and decides to swim the Channel. That day I tried to go nonstop for 45 minutes in the pool. Five months later I was doing five hours straight," says Walker, 37. "My first open-water experience was in a lake in February. I got severe hypothermia and nearly died." Most people might have quit then - not Walker. "It just made me more determined. I didn't want to have nearly killed myself for nothing."

Celebrate any achievement

"During the Ocean's Seven I was up against extreme cold, strong currents, giant swells and terrifying marine life, so any progress - no matter how tiny - was a massive achievement," says Walker. Next time you run a disappointing 10K or can't complete a set, congratulate yourself just for doing it. You're achieving more than the 90% of Brits who (according to a nationwide survey) haven't exercised at all in the past four weeks.

Always look on the bright side

True toughness is making a bad situation positive. "I got stung by a Portuguese man o' war jellyfish. I was in agony, but I had to find a way to carry on," says Walker. "I thought, 'I can swim for one minute. Everyone can do something for one minute.' I managed 30 seconds before yelling in pain again. Then I visualised the burning sensation as a warm blanket and convinced myself I was lucky to have it." He swam for another 3½ hours, knowing nothing else he faced would be as hard.

"Negative thoughts make bad situations worse. While you think you're warm you can't be cold"

Train your brain

"Negative thoughts make bad situations worse. Focus on positivity instead," says Walker. "Be specific: while you think you're warm you can't be cold. While you think you're strong you won't be weak." Research by the University of North Carolina confirms this sentiment, finding that optimistic feelings can not only allow us to succeed more often, but also provide more opportunities - whether that's a role being created for you at work or an invite to join a five-a-side team.

Embrace all obstacles

"You're going to face all sort of barriers in life," says Walker. "When you overcome them - big or small - you're getting stronger, whether that's

physically, emotionally or both. Conquering these swims means I can now propel myself to do anything I want in life." He proved this by beating his fear of public speaking to present a talk at the Royal Geographic Society about his experiences and start a career as a motivational speaker.

Adam Walker's book *Man vs Ocean* is out now. Visit oceanwalkeruk.com



Walker in the Cook Strait off New Zealand, where he was accompanied by dolphins

Words Max Anderton, Sophie Lodge. *Swimming the North Channel, Cook Strait, Molokai Channel, English Channel, Catalina Channel, Tsugaru Strait and the Strait of Gibraltar, a total of around 205km

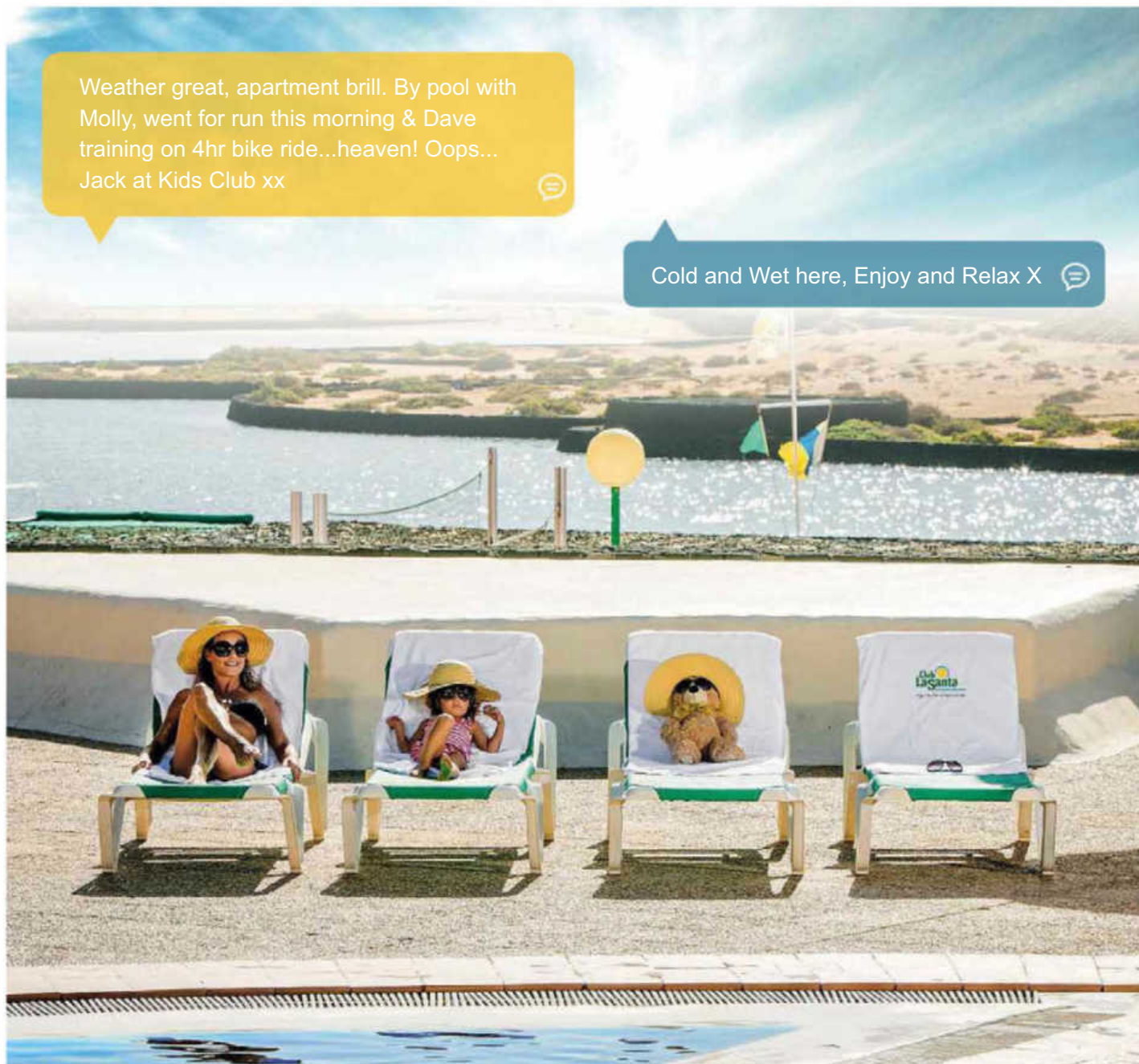
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**MUST-DO
MOVE**

Build stability and strength in one move

Need to destroy a training plateau? Use the earthquake squat - and shake things up

First, step away from the Bosu. Though it seems to make sense that wobbling atop one of those half-gym balls beloved of some “functional” trainers should activate your stabiliser muscles, studies suggest that all it actually does is decrease the amount of weight you can shift. Result: an unnecessarily compromised workout.

The solution? Add the instability to your weights, not your lifting platform. By dangling the plates or kettlebells from your bar, you'll increase muscular recruitment and inter-muscular co-ordination, as well as forcing your muscles to spend more time under tension as you struggle to control the bar - with a bonus fat-loss boost too. Louie Simmons uses the technique with the elite powerlifters he coaches - but since it also challenges your balance, it'll make you better at anything from five-a-side to scrambling up a Tough Mudder quarter-pipe.

How to do it

Hang a weight from each end of the bar using heavy resistance band - or split the load between several bands to cause smaller, but more random oscillations. Do your squat as normal: sitting back, keeping your weight through your heels - you'll probably have to slow the movement to maintain control. Keep the weights light at first but aim to build up to 80% of what you'd normally lift, and replace your normal squats with the earthquake variation in one session out of every four.



SHAKE IT OUT

The squat isn't the only move that can benefit from instability. Use these variations to build strong foundations for all your lifts

Overhead hold

Pressing an unstable bar overhead and keeping it there will challenge your core and reinforce your pressing position. Aim for a ten-second hold at the top.

Bench press

Powerlifters do this with a bamboo bar, but you don't need one: hang a kettlebell from each side of the bar and control it on the way down.

Barbell curl

Doing earthquake curls will force you to keep your biceps under tension, turbo-charging growth in your upper arms. Don't go too heavy.



Schelb uses ice axes to climb a moulin, a vertical tube formed by water pouring through a crack in the ice

When did you last have an adventure?

You don't have to jump off something huge - it's about doing things that scare you, says ice climber and photographer Tim Kemple

The treacherous gullies of Mount Washington, New Hampshire, have claimed 150 lives since the mid-19th century. But that didn't stop the young Tim Kemple from climbing its icy slopes when he was growing up nearby. And now, the 34-year-old photographer is committed to a life of never taking the easy option.

"We humans are creatures of comfort," says Kemple. "As I've gotten older, I've tried to put myself in positions where I don't know what the outcome is going to be. I want to see how I rise to that challenge. To me, that's what pure adventure is all about."

That means you don't need to climb at a world-class level or face down death to have adventure - all that's required, Kemple insists, is the element of the unknown. "It's that sense of not knowing what you might find, or if you'll even be successful that makes it an adventure." Even if it's as simple as finding out if you can make the run home from work, it all counts.

This shot of fellow climber Rahel Schelb, which Kemple took in the caves inside Vatna Glacier in Iceland, is testament to his tenacity and daring. "I knew we were going to find ice caves," he says. "I just wasn't sure if we'd be able to climb in them." With his attitude, he was always going to find a way.

Words Matt Huckle Photography Tim Kemple/smugmug.com

Tools of the trade

The essentials every ice climber needs



Ice axes

"Lightweight tools with picks that have jagged teeth and a finely beveled top edge. That means you can insert the pick into ice, displacing as little ice as possible, and then remove it without getting stuck."



Crampons

"These are 12-pronged metal soles which strap to stiff-soled mountain boots. They'll allow you to move much faster and with more security across glaciers and up steep walls of ice."



Ice screws

"Eight-inch [20cm] metal tubes with four sharp prongs at the tip. You push and twist to embed one into an ice wall. If placed in solid ice it can hold 1,500lb [680kg] - more than enough to catch a falling climber."

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Buying drugs off the Internet is basically never the answer

Will smart pills get me ahead?



Would you chug pills to get the edge? The stimulant modafinil is prescription-only but it's possible, and legal, to buy it over the internet - and a quarter of Oxford University students claim to have taken the drug to harness its reported capacity to increase cognitive ability, while the number of people using it for professional advantage is thought to be rising. "It's the first real example of a 'smart drug' which can genuinely help, for example, with exam preparation," says professor Guy Goodwin, president of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, who analysed 24 studies into modafinil, 70% of which found very few side effects.

Don't place your order just yet, though. Illicit suppliers are based overseas with little guarantee of purity, and the side effects discovered range from headaches to - yes - a desperate need to urinate.

The Bottom Line Doping always comes with consequences. Focus on better-quality food and sleep, and let the mental gains accumulate naturally.

Got FOMO?

Picture the scene: you're having a drink with an old friend when your phone buzzes. Sure, his story about trekking across the Namibian desert is interesting, but that notification could be a retweet of your pithy legs day joke.

Sound familiar? It doesn't mean you're an awful person. It just means you have fear of missing out, known as FOMO. This isn't the latest social media buzzword but a real psychological phenomenon. Here's what we know about it.

Our brains can't cope

In her book *Alone Together*, social psychologist Sherry Turkle reports that being connected with everyone all the time is a new experience our brains aren't equipped to cope with yet. Managing hundreds or even thousands of online friends erodes your real-life intimate relationships because we lack the capacity to distinguish between more than 150 people, says evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar.

A 2013 Oxford University study

concluded that FOMO is a driving factor in social media use and that it occurs most regularly in people who feel they lack in love, respect or security. Basically, we're afraid of missing out on affection.

We can learn to accept it

Turkle says that removing ourselves from tech can help lessen the effect, even if it's as simple as making yourself ignore the phone during dinner and switching screens off a set time before bed.

A more complete solution is accepting you're going to miss

out sometimes - not only will this put your mind at rest, it can also improve outcomes. Psychologist and Nobel laureate Herbert Simon recognised we lack the capacity to process complex decisions, so he suggested going for the first available option we determine as "good enough". Studies of this method show that people who insist on making "perfect" decisions are less satisfied than people who "make do".

So learn to let go, enjoy the people around you and... wait, was that a text?

The MF guide to napping at work

Taking 40 winks prevents impulsive behaviour and makes it easier to keep cool under stress, according to a University of Michigan study. Rebecca Robbins, author of Sleep For Success, explains the science of naps

Sell it first

Unless you're planning on heading to the disabled toilet with a neck pillow, you'll need to run things by the boss. "Explain that you'll be napping on your own time, during your lunch hour," says Robbins. "And that you'll be more productive in the afternoon as a result."

Sleepy time

When you do it is key to getting the most from your nap. "Power naps should be between 1pm and 4pm," says Robbins. "That's when we feel most drowsy and is early enough not to interfere with falling asleep at bedtime."

Get the timing right

Avoid a sleep hangover. "Set an alarm for 20 minutes if you can fall asleep quickly, 25 minutes if not," says Robbins. "Longer naps mean waking up mid-sleep cycle and feeling groggy rather than alert for the afternoon meeting."

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EAT THIS
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Updates | Eat Smart

Shortcut to strength

*Build instant muscle with
these delicious DIY flapjacks
- no baking required*

Remember that tub of New Year's resolution whey protein gathering dust on top of your kitchen cupboard? It's time to put it to good use, with this indulgent yet healthy flapjack recipe from Chef Frankie (frankies-kitchen.com). It swaps the traditional oven-baked approach for a quicker, easier, microwaveable method. A sweet snack that doesn't have to be saved for cheat days? Winner.

Nut butter is packed with heart-healthy fats and high levels of muscle-building protein

LESS THAN
5
MINUTES' PREP!

To make

Mix the coconut flour in a bowl with the whey protein. In a separate bowl, mix the nut butter, agave nectar, malt extract and porridge oats, then cook for one minute in the microwave. Remove, stir and mix with the flour and whey, adding a splash of almond milk. Spread the mixture evenly on a tray lined with greaseproof paper to your preferred thickness, then cover and refrigerate for 40 minutes. Remove, slice and enjoy.

Ingredients (makes 10-15 flapjacks)

2 scoops of whey protein / 170g
cashew or peanut butter / 2tsp
malt extract / 250ml agave
nectar / 75g porridge
oats / 200g coconut flour /
A splash of almond milk



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Is this jacket really worth £750?

The Vollebak Condition Black leads a new wave of ultra-high-performance clothing. This isn't just a coat - this is battle armour. So do you need it?

Protective panels

"There are 19 panels of Ceraspace - a tough, flexible fabric formed from ceramic particles - positioned at predicted impact points to virtually eliminate the chances of rips," says Steve Tidball, endurance racer and co-founder of Vollebak (vollebak.com).

Complete coverage

"Mountain bikers and skiers love it because the hood fits over a helmet, has space for goggles and zips up over your face, leaving no skin exposed," says Tidball. It has the bonus effect of making you look like a Sith Lord.

Base structure

Developed by expert Swiss textile manufacturer Schoeller, the base layer is a soft shell treated with a military-grade technology called NanoSphere. "It's waterproof and breathable. You *can't* get wet and *don't* get cold," says Tidball.

Worst-case scenario

If you come off the mountain bike trail or get lost adventure racing, your Condition Black will aid survival. "Ceraspace stays cool to limit loss of body heat, while magnetic pockets help keep your core organs warm when you're in a foetal position," says Tidball. You'll even find glow-in-the-dark instructions printed in your sight line for when brain and body start shutting down and you're too delirious to think.

Free movement

"If you covered your whole torso in Ceraspace, movement would be restricted," says Tidball. "Instead, we grooved it all so it's like body armour. It moves with you, not against you."

Moisture repellent

"You know how water droplets collect on leaves? This is like that. NanoSphere makes dirt and water simply run off the jacket's surface," says Tidball. Under a microscope you can see it's ridged, making it near-impossible for anything to take grip.



MF SAYS

Max Anderton,
Updates editor



Yes! If you do night-time endurance events, the hi-tech features make it worth the money. Having said that, it would make the ultimate commuter jacket to deal with any conditions. Time to start saving...



BA
BE AN ATHLETE

PREMIUM SPORTSWEAR

Q: How can I get rid of my BO?

Sweating isn't the cause of bad body odour - bacteria on your skin break down substances from your sweat glands to cause the unpleasant aroma. To tackle this, wash daily with soap or shower gel and scrub the areas where you sweat the most to keep them bacteria-free. Using a good-quality antiperspirant and avoiding eating excessive amounts of spicy foods and garlic will also help.

Q: I've been feeling down. How do I tell if I'm depressed, and what should I do?

Depression is common, affecting around one in ten people at any given time. Physical symptoms can include tiredness, poor sleep and loss of appetite, while sadness, despair and emotional instability are psychological indicators. Many mild cases resolve themselves quickly without any action or treatment - but more severe and prolonged bouts can be emotionally and physically crippling. If you or anyone you know displays long-lasting or debilitating symptoms, contact a GP.

The good news is that there are lots of ways to manage and beat depression. These include exercise - which studies have found to be as effective as medication in moderate cases - as well as psychotherapeutic options like cognitive behavioural therapy. Pharmaceutical alternatives like anti-depressants should be used as a last resort rather than a quick fix.

If you're scared or even concerned, head to your GP for a confidential and non-judgemental chat. And always remember - you are not alone.

Q: I have bad skin. What can I do?

In 80% of cases, acne is caused by genetics, although hormone levels, diet, cleanliness and emotions can all contribute. While you can't cure it completely, you can improve your skin by washing with a mild soap, using a light non-greasy moisturiser and trying over-the-counter products that contain benzoyl-peroxide (such as Panoxy), which help to eliminate spot-causing bacteria and keep your pores clear. If none of the above has any effect, it's time to book a doctor's appointment.

Dr Nick Knight

A GP in training, with a PhD in performance nutrition and physiology, Nick is *MF's* resident health expert. Follow him on Twitter @Dr_NickKnight

Ask Dr Nick
Any questions?
Tweet us
#AskDrNick

Q: I'm struggling to get up for it in the bedroom. What can I do to find my mojo?

For starters, don't worry - this is a common problem that can be treated. If you're relatively young, can get an erection when masturbating and often wake up with one, the issue is probably a psychological one such as stress or sexual anxiety. Opening up with your partner about how you're feeling can help, as can "talking therapy" if you'd rather speak to a professional to help work things out. If you're older and fail to get erections at all or suffer from health issues such as high blood pressure or diabetes, then it could be a physiological problem - most of which can be solved with medication that your GP can prescribe.

"The UK is an excellent place to have a go," says Torbet, pictured snorkelling in the River Etive, near Glen Coe





Andy Torbet

A former paratrooper and bomb disposal officer in Iraq, Andy is now an extreme skydiver, underwater explorer and climber – and *MF*'s new regular adventure expert

Follow Andy at  andy_torbet

Q: Where's the best place to snorkel in the UK?

A: Snorkelling is one of the simplest and cheapest ways of seeing a different world and with around 32,000km of coastline, 16,000km of rivers and 11,000 lakes, the UK is an excellent place to have a go. Most of this underwater world is within reach of the snorkeller – and yet only a small fraction has ever been gazed upon by humans.

Not sure where to start? Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset is the home of the UK's only "snorkel trail" where numbered buoys lead you around with information on the different habitats in each area.

If you don't want to be bothered with any actual swimming, head to the River Lune under the Devil's Bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria. The water flows gently, allowing you to float along with the current to see some beautiful river-carved geology and a variety of fish, eels and invertebrates. Not bad for a simple plastic tube.

Q: Any suggestions for mountain climbing off the beaten track?

A: If you're a competent climber, and confident you can judge if untested rock is suitable to climb, you can branch out. Morocco still has huge amounts of unexplored quality rock, from the desert valleys to mountain crags in the High Atlas. There are a number of guidebooks to show you where you can deviate from established routes.

The Balkans also remain untapped by all but a few local climbers – I remember marvelling at the superb gorges and rugged valleys there. Croatia and Slovenia are still unusual but becoming more popular; Bosnia, Kosovo and Serbia are the best bet for the adventurous.

Of course we have our own wild areas at home too. Northern Scotland is still packed with unclimbed rock in places like Cape Wrath, across the Highlands and the Western Isles. Take your pick!

Q: What kit do I need to spend money on, and what can I get super-cheap?

A: Don't spend loads on pre-dehydrated meals. In the mountains I take cheap noodles, salami and some dehydrated veg – cheap from justingredients.co.uk. It all keeps for weeks, costs pennies and just needs boiling water.

What you should spend money on is footwear. Get the right type for whatever you're doing and make sure they fit properly. Also, anything that's going to save your life. If a cheap stove breaks down I'm eating cold rations, but if a cheap parachute fails to open I'm screwed.

I own an expensive marine VHF radio transmitter and I take it whenever I'm sea kayaking. In four years, I've never used it once. But when the day comes and I need it I'd happily pay one hundred times its worth to be able to contact the nice men from the RNLI to take me home. Don't die for the sake of leaving a slightly better-off corpse.

Q: Does your experience as a bomb disposal officer in Iraq help you in your adventures?

A: Being a soldier taught me how to assess danger and eliminate or mitigate it to an acceptable level. Cave diving or wingsuit skydiving may look dangerous but with training, planning, kit and attitude we can complete deep cave dives or jump out of planes (or defuse bombs) in relative safety. Things can still go wrong, but we can stack the odds in our favour. I'm not an adrenaline junkie or a gambler – I'm a control freak. That's why I'm still alive.



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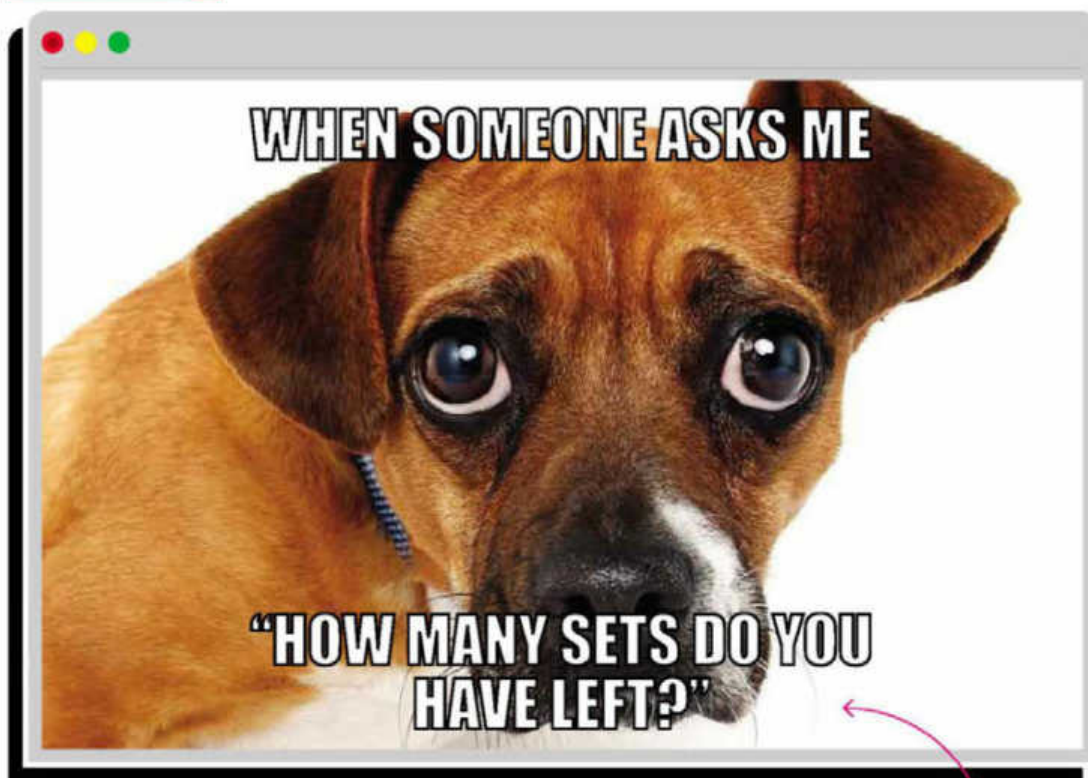
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Andy Barton

Leading sports performance consultant
Barton (thesportingmind.com)
has worked with Premier League
footballers, European Tour golfers
and Olympians – but would he use
inspirational pictures to motivate them?

If seeing this makes
you want to smash
anything other than a
PB, motivational memes
probably aren't for you

Q: Can memes inspire me to work out harder?

We've all seen them, cluttering up our Facebook or Instagram timelines: some inspiring words stuck over a picture of Leo Messi or Michael Jordan. We scan them and move on, or ignore them altogether. And let's be honest: if someone told you reading them would have a significant effect on your training, you'd probably laugh.

But before you start unfollowing the worst offenders, let me assure you that there are some positives you can take away. Scientific research has shown that we perform better when we're having fun or in a good frame of mind than otherwise. A 2011 study published in *Perspectives On Psychological Science* found that athletes who used positive and instructional self-talk to motivate themselves performed better in games.

Motivation is a personal thing and it really comes down to how much you buy into what you're seeing. If you see a post and think, "Oh, that's nice" it's not going to stay with you. But if you see something and think, "Yes, these specific

words resonate with me at this specific moment in time", it can give you a genuine lift.

Some people are motivated by negatives. Swimmer and winner of 18 Olympic gold medals Michael Phelps recently said he uses negative comments he hears to help him chase success that bit harder. And after the Ohio State American football team's overconfidence led to a crushing defeat in the 2007 National Championships, their coaches made the team watch a video of all the put-downs about their performance. It pushed the humiliated team to bounce back and reach the finals of the following year's championship.

I'd argue, though, that those people have a problem. There's no point in success if you get no joy out of it. Those who are motivated by negative thoughts aren't pushed to succeed – rather, they don't want to fail or look bad.

One of the most positive things you can do is share your progress online. You will get a surge of the neurotransmitter dopamine – giving you a hit in the brain's pleasure centre – from every congratulatory comment or Like you get. In fact, you don't even need a response – a 2012 Harvard University study found that sharing information about yourself is intrinsically rewarding, releasing dopamine and making you feel good.

Ultimately, it's about you, and how much you allow yourself to be motivated. If you're a sceptic, no Facebook post – however powerful – is likely to improve your performance. But if you're open to letting Muhammad Ali quotes inspire you, enjoy the PB that positive attitude could bring you.

Psyched up

Barton's tips to get you firing on all cylinders

Set an inspiring goal

If you can find a reason to train, you will find it far more motivating – whether that's to get fit enough to run a marathon, complete an Ironman or achieve an extraordinary feat for charity. We get much more excited by big challenges that have a purpose than by easy everyday goals, so make it a goal that inspires you.

Tell the world

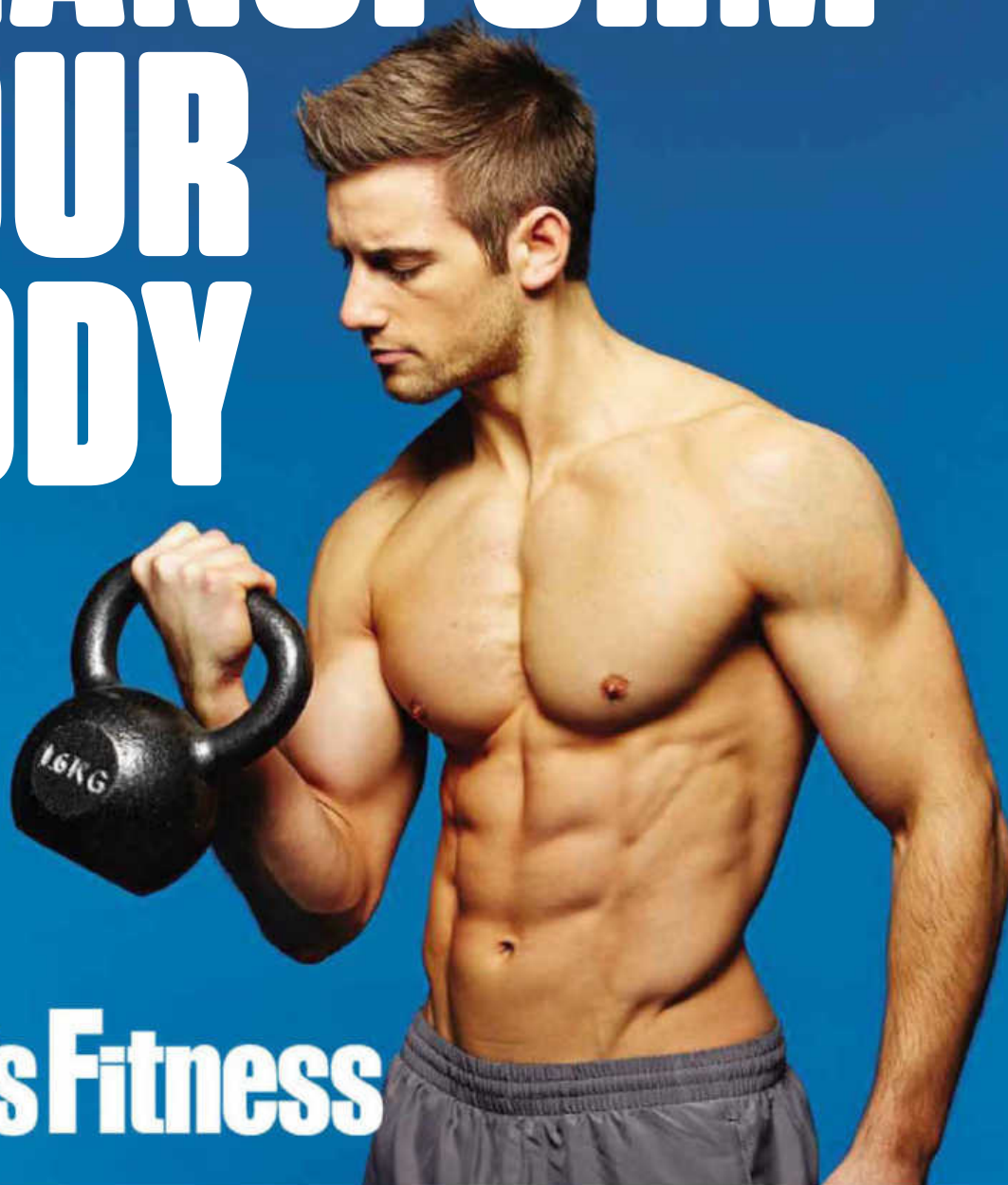
Research shows that people who share their goals with others are far more motivated to achieve them than those who keep their goals to themselves. Social media is a great platform for this, enabling you to share your progress with your friends and receive support when the going gets tough.

Just get moving

If you're not in the mood to go on the long run or cycle ride you'd planned, just set your sights a bit lower – make a deal with yourself that you'll do something, even if it's just a short session. Once you get moving and are in training mode, there's a good chance you'll be motivated to keep going for the longer distance.

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Matt Huckle

MF's features writer has always tried to stick to the recommended weekly limit of 21 units of alcohol – only to see it slashed by a third in 2016. He asks what's really a healthy amount to drink

Q: Is my drinking killing me?

Put down the merlot! It'll wreck your liver, it was never good for your heart and now it looks as if it's probably going to give you cancer as well. At least, that's what the government's updated alcohol guidelines say in a nutshell.

A new report – headed up by Sally Davies, chief medical officer for England – found drinking even small amounts of alcohol regularly will increase your risk of a range of cancers. Worse, unless you're a woman over 55 who drinks less than five units a week, there's no benefit to your heart health.

This sobering (pun fully intended) set of findings suggests we've been doing ourselves a lot of unnecessary harm over the years. It's prompted the government to lower the recommended alcohol limits for men down from 21 units a week to 14, bringing them in line with those for women. That's six pints of 4% beer.

So where did all that a-bit-of-alcohol-is-actually-pretty-good-for-you stuff come from? Well, numerous studies have shown those benefits to exist. There are also meta-studies showing a link between moderate drinking and living longer, as well as research indicating alcohol can help prevent cardiovascular disease. When the US produced a similar recent report (the snappily named Scientific Report Of The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee), it found that moderate alcohol intake – 3.5 units a day for men – can be part of a healthy diet

Davies, however, said the idea of a glass of red wine a day protecting your heart was simply an "old wives' tale". As always, it's crucial not to confuse correlation with causation. For moderate drinkers, there are often other lifestyle factors at play – such as healthy diet and social life, both of which contribute significantly to low stress and a consequent reduction in heart disease risk. It isn't as if the new guidelines



are based on new research proving alcohol is harmful – they're simply a more cautious interpretation of the existing evidence.

Spirit guide

So have we all ruined our health by following the 21-unit recommendation, which has been in place since 1987? Well, as long as you've not been drinking all your weekly units on one day and putting pressure on your liver and other organs, it's unlikely. And as long as you've been exercising and eating well – you have, right? – you shouldn't have much to worry about.

Will the new guidelines work? The University of Stirling published a study in 2013 on limiting harm from alcohol. It suggested minimum prices per unit, restrictions on advertising and reducing the drink-drive limit. Nothing was mentioned about telling people to consume less because, you guessed it, guidelines like these don't have a significant impact. If the government wants to alter people's drinking habits then, rather than issuing punitive-sounding restrictions, they should work on practical solutions.

The Bottom Line People resent following drink guidelines, but it's not that hard to booze safely. Keep two consecutive days a week alcohol free, and don't cane it on Friday and Saturday night.

15,000

Pints of beer drunk every minute in the UK

£15 billion

Amount spent a year on booze in Britain

8,416

Alcohol-related UK deaths in 2013

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Q: Are too many men taking a reckless approach to training?

BBC documentary *Dying For a Six-Pack* reported that body image issues are on the rise, as is steroid use. Is this sensationalist, or should we be worried?



The natural bodybuilder

A physique competitor who's never touched steroids, Rolandas Malinauskas (personaltraining4u.net) specialises in body transformations

Back in the day bodybuilding was more niche. That meant the guys doing it were serious about their development - they often had more natural potential and approached it with discipline. Now the jacked look has gone mainstream, but few have the knowhow, commitment or genetics to achieve it.

That means more guys in gyms who don't understand or embrace hard training ethics. They see training as a part of their grooming ritual, and they don't seem to separate steroids from Botox or other beauty treatments.

We need more education about natural training and dieting. Body dysmorphia is debilitating, but these conditions occur due to a lack of understanding of how our bodies work. The problem isn't people wanting to get bigger; it's a lack of knowledge of how to do it safely. And despite the rising number of steroid users, the main problem isn't six-packs - it's fat bellies.



The personal trainer

Jonny Rees works at Ultimate Performance Fitness (upfitness.co.uk), one of the country's leading one-to-one coaching gyms

While it's true that more men are worrying about their appearance, it's not to the extent the media is portraying. I also think a lot of it is positive. Men are more aware of the dangers of obesity, bad cardio health and poor diet. Going to the gym to do something about it is better than drinking ten pints and having a kebab. That's a far bigger problem for British men.

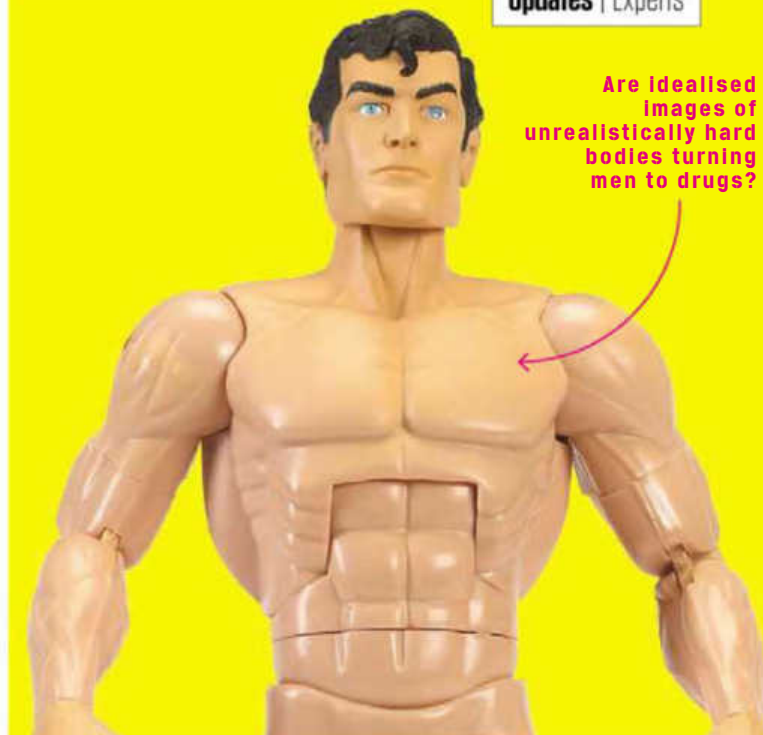
A stat - based on a small study of bodybuilders in the 1980s - is doing the rounds saying one in ten men suffer from body dysmorphia, but I work with guys who want to improve their physiques, and I can say that's not the case. They're driven to improve body parts they see as not up to scratch, but none of them takes an irrational or unrealistic approach. Most don't even care about having a six-pack, they just don't want a gut.

MF SAYS

Max Anderton,
Updates editor



No, British men aren't suddenly "dying for a six-pack". Body image issues are a problem, but mental health is the root cause. How we address that should be under scrutiny, not men who exercise.



Are idealised images of unrealistically hard bodies turning men to drugs?



The drug counsellor

Steve Wood is a service manager at Open Road (openroad.org.uk), a drop-in centre providing support and advice for people suffering from drug and alcohol problems

I started working with steroid users in 2009, but in recent years the number has snowballed. We assess one new user every day, and younger people are coming in - the average age used to be 28 but it's falling. We get guys as young as 18. Anyone under 24 using steroids is putting their long-term health at risk.

For most of the year we're inundated with what I call "beach steroid users" who want to look good for the summer. They've gone to the gym and aren't putting on muscle as quickly as they see other lads doing it. The problem? Chances are they're comparing themselves to the guys already on steroids.

The fitness industry needs to educate these guys. We need to warn people off harmful drugs - but also let them know how to get bigger safely. Right now, people are getting bad info from mates or the internet. Warning signs in gyms would be a start.



The body image expert

Professor Ewan Gillon is a chartered psychologist and clinical director of First Psychology Scotland (firstpsychology.co.uk)

Men are more likely to seek any sort of therapy now than they were ten years ago. Those men are still in the minority but in general there's an increase in cases of psychological and emotional problems, of which body image is a part.

With men, body image isn't often the problem they present with. They come because they're upset or because something has happened - such as being dumped or doing something out of character - and then the body issues come out later.

With men, unlike women in the main, body concerns go both ways. Women tend to be anxious about being too big; with men, just as often it's "I'm too small". From there comes the dangerous obsession with training or turning to drugs. There have always been people who go to extremes, people we'd call compulsive. From my experience there are more compulsive men now and as a result the extreme side is growing too. But it's always a relatively small proportion of the population.

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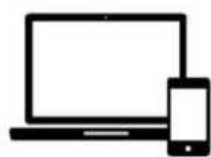
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04
16

Personal best

Game-changing
gear and inspiration

A 5K PARK RUN WITH

Kevin Hart

The American actor and comedian is working with Nike to get more people moving. After leading group runs and workouts in the US, now he's come to the UK to spread his message →

Words Max Anderton
Photography Stefania Curto

G

etting up at 6.45am on a Sunday in January isn't usually MF's idea of fun, but today is different. We've been invited to join Kevin Hart, star of *Get Hard* and the new *Ride Along 2*, on the first leg of his challenge to run 5K in 15 countries in 2016. He greets us, smiling and laughing, and any early morning grumbles soon evaporate.

Tell us about Move With Hart.

Of course, people know me for being an incredible actor and hilarious comedian, but I also love to train and I wanted to share that with people too. It's only right to take things to another level and engage my fans to train with me. It was a spontaneous thing when I started inviting fans to do 5Ks while I was in their cities performing. That spontaneous thing just grew and grew, and then grew some more.

And Nike's involvement?

They saw what I was doing and wanted a slice of the action! We developed a partnership, which was simply about motivating people to come out and better themselves. Through social media it's grown into a global...

Phenomenon?

I was going to say collaboration, but yeah, let's go with phenomenon.

And that relationship with Nike has grown too...

Yeah, I've been a supporter of theirs for a long time. I'm a sneakerhead, man! And what respectable sneaker-loving guy wouldn't want to work with them? Just think of all the free shoes I'll get now.

You've got your own shoe, right?

That's right - the Hustle Hart is coming to a store near you this April.

How much of an input did you have in its creation?

A lot, man. They allowed me to bring my ideas to this thing we wanted to do, which was to design a shoe for fitness, not style. It looks awesome, and it's not a celebrity shoe designed to be exclusive, limited edition or anything like that. It's a multi-purpose shoe. It fits all my needs, and I do a bunch of stuff: running, jumping, lifting. You name it, I do it.



Runners brave a winter Sunday morning in London to join Hart's 5K

"I make people laugh for a living and I love it - why be nervous about it?"

Sounds great...

It is, and what's really exciting is that because of Move With Hart, other people are going to be able to start this physical fitness journey at the same pace I do, in the same shoe I'm wearing.

Did you get to go to Nike HQ?

Yes. I've been there. I've been in the TOP SECRET headquarters, and no, I can't discuss what I saw. They blindfold you, put a hood over your head, spin you around 20 times, then put you in the door. That's what happens.

You told US talk show host Jimmy Fallon you want to "inspire people to become the best versions of themselves through physical fitness". How is Move With Hart making that happen?

It's happening at every event with the people showing up. We're not getting world-class athletes, we're getting



everyday individuals who need a kick-start. The beauty is that it genuinely brings people together. Physical fitness, and especially running, is something we can all dive into. It grabs all races, ethnicities, shapes and sizes. As a unit you all achieve greatness, no matter how fast or slow you are. There's an athlete in all of us. You just gotta discover it.

What kicked off the discovery for you?

Being in movies meant being in a position to be seen, and I thought it was only fair that I maximise my potential for the people who pay money to see me on a big screen. I thought, if I can look the part then I'll really *be* the part. It started

off as just getting into shape for a role but eventually it became a lifestyle.

Your latest movie, *Ride Along 2*, is an action comedy. Do you want to make the jump to fully fledged action hero?

I'm slowly jumping into that realm. As I get older I'm going to do different things. Comedy will eventually give way to action, the action will move to drama and then I'll come back to comedy... then I'll do animation! I have a lot of different doors that I could open. Right now I'm toying with which doors to walk through.

You've played comedy shows to tens of thousands of people. How do

you psych yourself up to stand out there, just you and a microphone?

There's no routine at all. I think that's what people would love the most if they actually saw what I do before a show. I make people laugh for a living and I love it - why be nervous about it?

Surely your first stand-up set was a bit nerve-wracking?

I was never nervous. Awful, but never nervous - there's a difference. The first time I did it, I was in love with the lights and the fact that people were listening to what I was saying. Granted I didn't give them much to listen to, but it didn't matter.

So even if the people in the audience are not laughing, it's fine?

Yeah, because they're here and they're listening to me. But of course that's the end goal. Laughing is like fitness - one of those things we all share as people. I don't care where you're from, I don't care who you are. I don't care what race you are. Everybody laughs. If you can bring laughter on a universal level, you have separated yourself from the pack. This is my calling: to bring people closer together, to bring joy to people. I see my audiences as people I'm about to bring joy to, like what we're doing here today. A shared experience that everyone comes away from happier.

The run is about to start, so we head to the heart of Battersea Park. Hart makes a speech in which he jokingly threatens to elbow the foreheads of any children who ➔

Hart says his mission, both in comedy and running, is to bring people together



are thinking of giving up mid-event, before getting serious and encouraging people to help if they see anyone struggling. It's genuinely funny and motivating, and after he's finished speaking, there isn't a single person here who regrets getting up so early on a Sunday morning. I line up alongside Hart, with just time for another quick chat before the start.

What's your 5K time look like?
My best or today?

Today. Just wondering if we'll be able to keep up?
This morning's going to be slower, probably around 21-22 minutes. Besides, this isn't a race. Unless I win, obviously.

Everyone sets off and there's a palpable buzz of energy as runners clamour to jog alongside a Hollywood star, or just gawp for a few seconds as Hart's ever-growing entourage goes past. Once he's finished, Hart high fives everyone who crosses the line after him and gives the last person a hug. Another great speech and a group selfie later, Hart disappears into the grey London morning flanked by security. It's barely 10am, but the day has already been way better than any Sunday has a right to be.

Find out more about the NRC community's weekly run clubs and the Nike+ Running App at nike.com/london.



Tweets from the Hart

Not familiar with @KevinHart4Real? Get to know by joining his 25.3 million followers for 140-character gems like these



Tweets

Kevin Hart @KevinHart4real

Why are toilets so damn powerful in the UK? I just flushed the toilet and the water splashed me on my neck. I got toilet water on my NECK.

Kevin Hart @KevinHart4real

Nothing worse than taking a shower and having to take a shit after you dry off... now I have to get my shitty ass back in the shower lol

Kevin Hart @KevinHart4real

This is how my week goes: Mooooooooooooooooonday, Tuuuuuuuuuuuuuesday, Weeeeeeeeeeeeeednesday, Thuuuuuuuuuuuursday, FridaySaturdaySunday

Kevin Hart @KevinHart4real

Before Drake started saying YOLO did y'all think you could live twice or some shit?

Kevin Hart @KevinHart4real

It's a well-known fact that tall people are evil.



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Colour-coding makes selecting loads (up to 22.5kg in 2.25kg increments) easy with the PowerBlock Sport 5.0 (£305, gymcompany.co.uk).



A satisfying click rewards every weight change on the Bowflex SelectTech (£346, amazon.co.uk). Choose from 2 to 24kg.



The Ironmaster Quick-Lock (£547, valleyfitness.co.uk) feels more like a regular dumbbell. It's slower to change than the others but goes up to a whopping 34kg.



Work with dumbbells to avoid muscle imbalances

Your definitive home



Shiny chromeset

For... weights so sleek you'll keep them on display

Changing the six weight discs is slower than with the adjustables, but this 20kg Pro Fitness (£55, argos.co.uk) set is cheaper - and works for abs roll-outs.



The 15kg Body Power Chrome Ergo (£91, fitness-superstore.co.uk) has a contoured handle that fits snugly in the hand and makes grip strength less of a factor.



This one-piece 10kg dumbbell from Marcy (£66, dumbbellsonline.net) won't loosen over time. And before you scoff at its lightness, try high-rep sets of flyes with it.



We love the chunky wing collars on the York 15kg (£57, yorkfitness.com), while the rubber-covered grips make long sessions less callous-inducing.



How we tested

Personal Best editor Max Anderton did a six-move, no-bench home workout - not just with the products above, but every type he could get his (callused) hands on.

Biceps curl



Overhead press



Hammer curl





Floor-friendly rubber

For... pumping iron without clanking metal

You can change weights on the Bodymax Deluxe (£30, powerhouse-fitness.co.uk) up to 15kg per dumbbell, while a rubber coating protects floors.



Our favourite for renegade rows. The flat sides and gripping rubber of the Body Power Rubber Hex (£43, fitness-superstore.co.uk) reduce the chance of slips.



The Jordan Classic (£98, jordanfitness.com) lets you do abs roll-outs on a wood floor without sounding like a 1940s fighter jet taking off.



The 20kg Alex (£165, servicesport.co.uk) is pricy, but its high-grade polyurethane coating means you won't damage the floor if you drop it.



dumbbell guide

We tried and tested every weight widely available in the UK. These are the ones worth buying



Classic cast irons

For... weights so durable they'll outlive you

Confidence Fitness Pros (£25, tesco.com) are the bedroom workout classic. This 20kg set is perfectly fine for a full-body workout.



A carry case makes the 30kg TurnerMAX (£55, amazon.co.uk) easy to transport. Just don't indulge any weird sniper-rifle fantasies as you slot the pieces into place.



We like to use a 45lb (20.4kg) one of these old-school Hex dumbbells (£40 each, sears.com) for unilateral exercises like one-arm rows.



This classic 25kg weight from Gold's Gym (£44 each, available in Sweatband stores only) is great for strongman moves, and the fat handle will build a killer grip.



Renegade row

High pull

Front raise



Inside a successful man's desk drawer

Have you got the right tools to reach the top (or at least smell better at work)?





Words Max Anderton Photography James Lincoln

1 Don't crack

Air conditioning and heating both dry out lips. Anthony Advanced Formula balm (£8, mankind.co.uk) uses mint and white tea to keep them hydrated without the feminine gloss effect that most salves create.

2 Be ready for close encounters

Hello Breathspray (£2.64, hello-products.com) kills any lurking bacteria - and worries that your wife-to-be from accounts might regret leaning over your shoulder to explain the expenses system.

3 Get super powered

The smarter phones get, the hungrier they become. The KNOMO Power Pack (£45, knomobags.com) does two full charges. Chuck it in your pocket when heading out with low bars.

4 Treasure your memory

Proving that digital storage devices can be works of art too, the 8GB Empty Memory (£60, beyond-object.com) has a unique look that'll stop you losing it like every other USB stick you've ever owned.

5 Take notes like a boss

The Livescribe 3 Smartpen (£130, livescribe.com) lets you save and send digital copies of your handwritten scrawls and even dictate reminders. Use it with the compatible Moleskine Notebook (£24, moleskine.com). Note to self: I'm living in the future, and it's awesome.

6 Look sharp all the time

Whether it was raining on your way in or you were short of time after the gym, a quick application of Daimon Barber Classic Pomade (£15, thedaimonbarber.com) will put your hair firmly back in place.

7 Upgrade your aroma

Studies show that certain smells trigger positive neurological responses. A whiff of your Acqua Di Parma Colonia Club (£60 for 50ml, uk.acquadiparma.com) and bigwigs will remember you for all the right reasons.

8 Hide your sins

Eyes are the windows to our souls - which means bag-destroying, revitalising creams like Kiehl's Eye Alert (£22.50, kiehls.co.uk) are vital in the war against the two main giveaways that something's amiss: tiredness and stress.

9 Maintain your poise

There's no need to turn up for a meeting looking bedraggled or with a cumbersome golf umbrella - grab the compact Fulton Chelsea 2 (fultonumbrellas.com) to stay dry and presentable.

10 Take highbrow refreshments

With none of the dusty bits found in other herbals, Teapigs teabags (from £1.30, teapigs.co.uk) are full of flavour *and* super-ethical. They're Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance-certified - plus the company donates to Rwandan orphanages.

11 Kill the noise

Bose SoundTrue Ultras (£130, bose.co.uk) don't just sound crisp and punchy, they isolate noise - perfect for cutting out distractions but without you having to wear comically oversized cans.

12 Guilt-free snacks

Protein-rich BEEFit jerky is made from grass-fed British meat (£6 for 105g, beefitbiltong.com), while Ludlow Nut Co's trail mix (£1, ludlownut.co.uk) will provide a tasty hit of good fats and natural sugars.

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The Expert

Shikera Lewis is manager of Seduire Clinics in Soho, London. A pedicure expert, she's seen more feet than Quentin Tarantino's casting director, and recommends getting one done professionally every three months.

1 SOFT START

"Soak your feet in warm water for ten minutes, making it easy to remove dead cells and hard skin. Dry your feet thoroughly afterwards."

PRO TIP "If you have really hard skin, add half a cup of milk. The natural lactic acid softens more than any product."

2 EXTERMINATE

"Take a foot file - I use the Microplane Colossal (£13, amazon.co.uk) because of its large surface area - and rub as hard as is comfortable around your heel, the ball of your foot and any bits of tough skin."

PRO TIP "Use a scrub to remove dead skin. I love Sabon (£19, sabonuk.co.uk) because it's all natural, using crushed almond kernels to exfoliate."

3 NAIL IT

"Don't hack away with cheap tools. Get a decent nailcare set (£169, tayloroldbondst.co.uk) complete with nail buff, scissors and clippers. And try not to be overzealous when trimming: too short and they'll be painful."

PRO TIP "Cut nails straight to reduce the chance of ingrown toenails."

4 BUFF UP

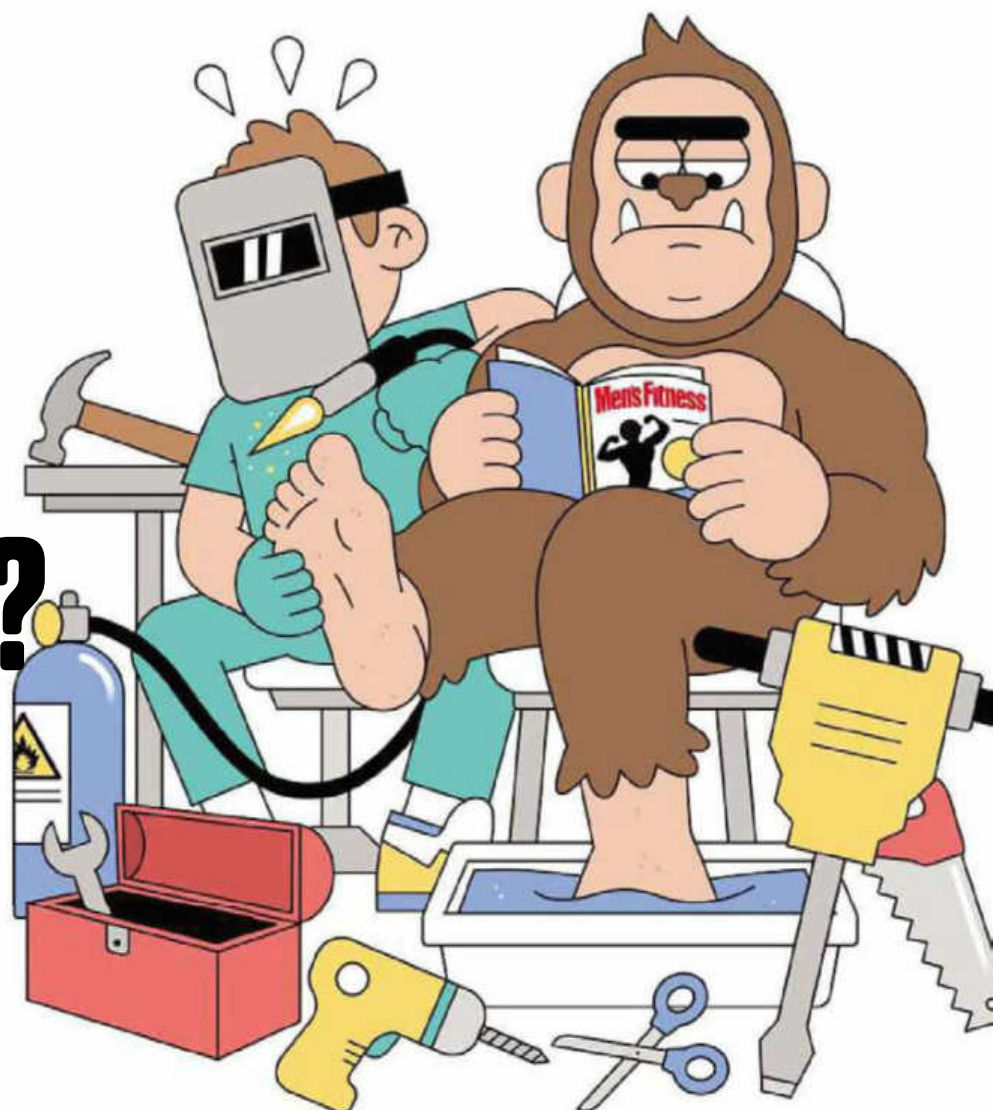
"Use the buff's rough side on the nail surface, and then the smoother side. File the tops and apply oil to keep the cuticles and skin around your nails hydrated. Jack Black Epic Moisture MP 10 Nourishing Oil (£27, mankind.co.uk) works great and smells manly - plus it can also be used on beards."

PRO TIP "Yellow nails? Fix them by soaking your toes in a bowl of lemon juice for ten to 15 minutes, then scrubbing with a toothbrush."

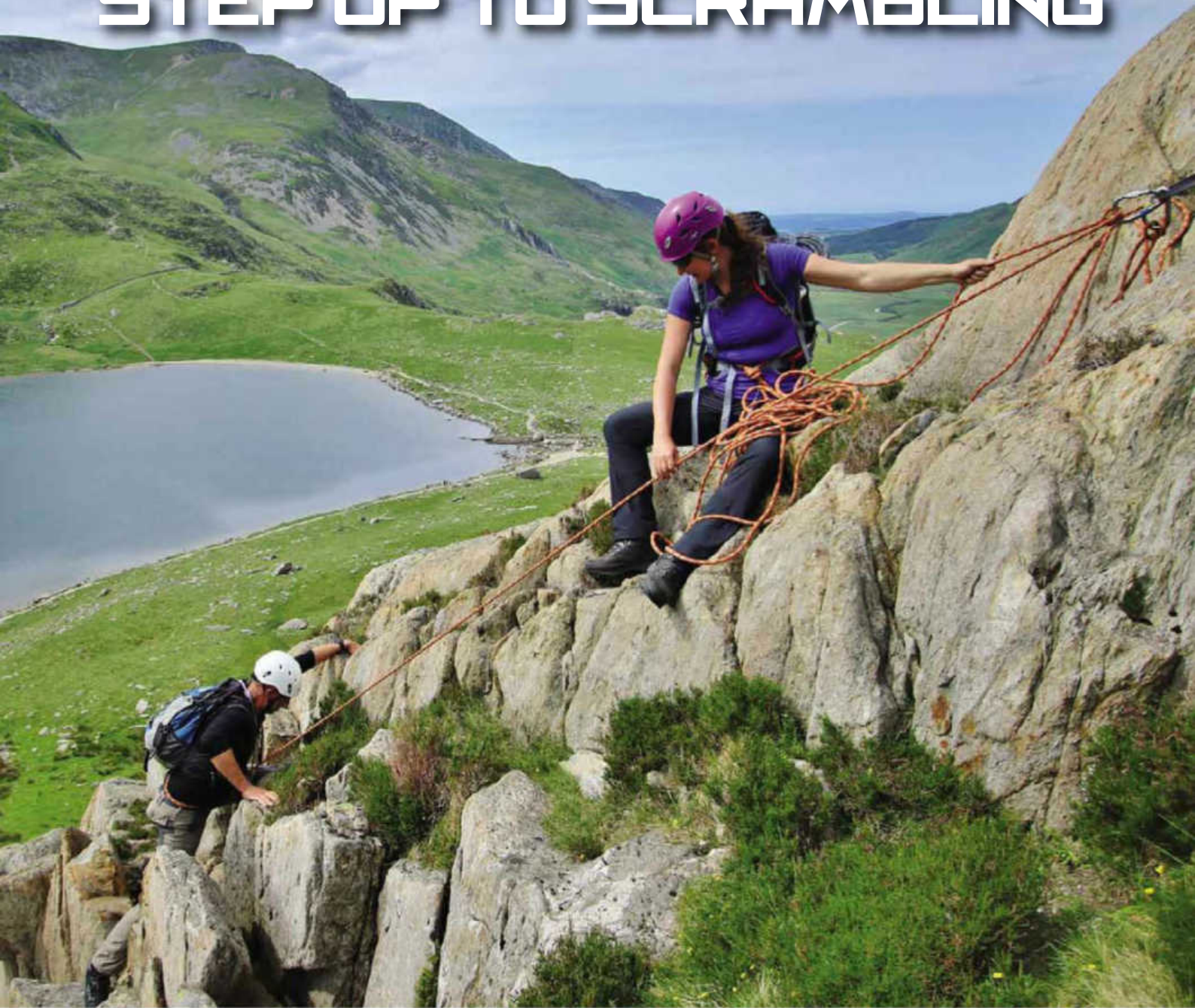
5 SMOOTH FINISH

"Rub foot cream all over. I use Lotil (£6, chemistdirect.co.uk) on male customers because it's absorbed super-quickly - perfect if you're impatient - and has no odour. If your heels are in a particularly bad way, use Origins Reinventing The Heel (£23, origins.co.uk)."

PRO TIP "Apply every night before bed. Your feet will soon be soft enough to make babies' bums jealous."



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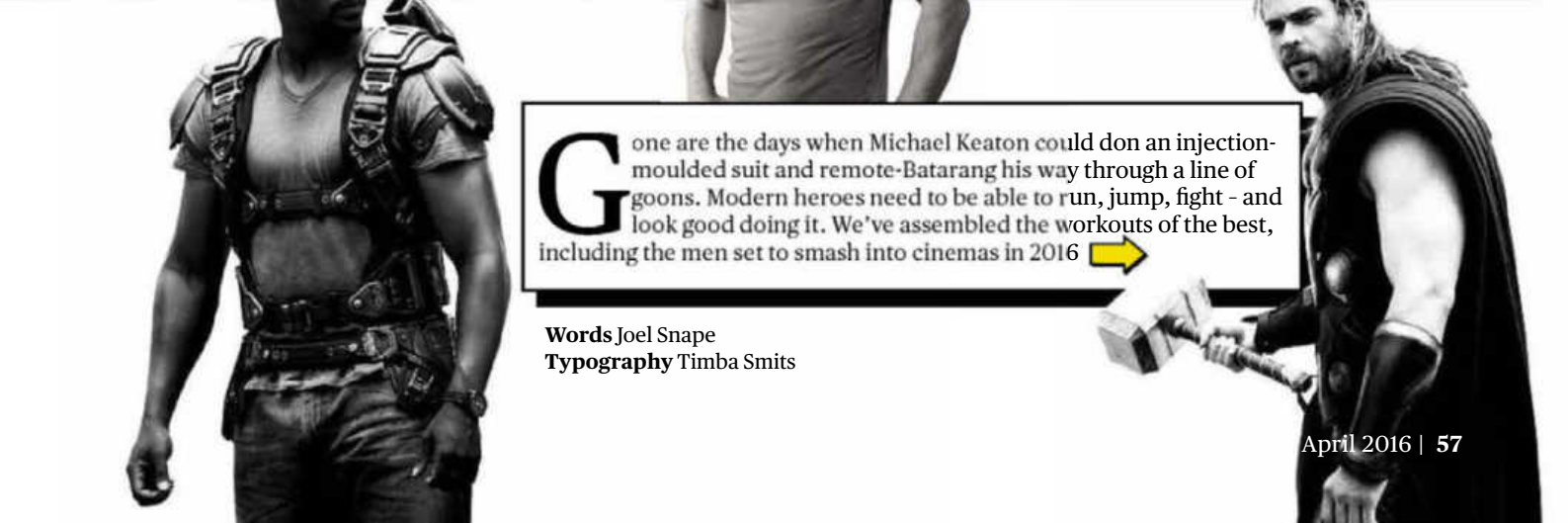
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The best superhero workouts of all time

Gone are the days when Michael Keaton could don an injection-moulded suit and remote-Batarang his way through a line of goons. Modern heroes need to be able to run, jump, fight - and look good doing it. We've assembled the workouts of the best, including the men set to smash into cinemas in 2016 ➡

Words Joel Snape
Typography Timba Smits

22

25

Kick-Ass

AKA Aaron Taylor-Johnson

He's an ab-free everyman in the first film, but for the sequel - where Kick-Ass has embraced crimefighting - Taylor-Johnson kicked it up a notch alongside trainer Richard Smedley. Their money move? The three-chair press-up. Arrange your seats in a triangle, then do a press-up between them to get more range of motion and activate your outer pecs.

24

Deathstroke

AKA Manu Bennett

To cope with shoulder issues from his sword-swinging stint on TV's *Spartacus*, Bennett switched to swimming, rowing and hot yoga for his run as *Arrow*'s master assassin. And those abs? "They're from a lot of packing my own food for planes."

23

Arrow

AKA Stephen Amell

As well as channelling his onscreen hero's alter ego Oliver Queen with parkour-style circuits, Amell's mastered the "salmon ladder", the nemesis of Ninja Warrior challengers across the globe. Haven't got one in your gym? Explosive pull-ups are the **best prep you'll get**: pull hard enough that you've got the momentum to (briefly) take your hands off the bar at the top, and add a clap when you're feeling super-confident.



Star-Lord

AKA Chris Pratt

"Six months, no beer" was the explanation Pratt gave for shedding his gut to play a Guardian of the Galaxy, but you don't need to be so hardline: just keep two days a week clear (preferably consecutive) to let your liver recover and allow your body to focus on fat loss.

21

The Falcon

AKA Anthony Mackie

Mackie got lean as the Falcon, but it was *Pain & Gain* co-star Mark Wahlberg who introduced him to a new level of training. "We would start every morning at 5.30am and get in a few hours of serious workouts. Before anyone else was up, we were in the gym."

20

Human Torch

AKA Michael B Jordan

To go from the accidental superhero of 2012's *Chronicle* to one of the Fantastic Four, Jordan spent months eating "every two hours", but it wasn't all drudgery - breakfast included four eggs, turkey sausage and grits, and dinner was typically steak. Also worth trying: the clockwise press-up. "Do 12 press-ups, then 11, then ten and so on, moving your body counter-clockwise," Jordan says. "Do 25-30 sit-ups, then do it all again, clockwise this time."

19

Dredd

AKA Karl Urban

To get into character, NZ actor Urban spent 14 weeks training and eating six to seven meals a day, learning tactical movement and shooting from a British military team, and "reading every Dredd comic [he] could find". Oh, and practising the voice, obviously.

18

Ant-Man

AKA Paul Rudd

Rudd trained for more than a year for his mostly besuited role as Marvel's smallest hero. His money move for Ant-Abs in his single shirt-off scene? Holding a sandbag overhead while doing lying flutter-kicks.



17 Wolverine

AKA Hugh Jackman

He may not quite have Logan's longevity, but he's not doing too badly: at the age of 47, Jackman's recently joined the 1,000lb (454kg) powerlifting club, posting a 410lb (186kg) deadlift, 345lb (156kg) squat and 235lb (107kg) bench press in a single day. Looking to nudge your own numbers over the top? Get mad, Wolverine-style: by gripping the bar as hard as you can before any big lift, you'll achieve an effect called "irradiation" (no, nothing to do with the mutant kind), which tightens up all the surrounding muscles and adds stability, letting you shift more weight.





Batman

AKA Ben Affleck

With Christian Bale's terrifyingly ripped take on the Caped Crusader to live up to, Ben Affleck went back to Rehan Jalali - the coach who got him into shirtless-pull-up shape for bullet-riddled heist drama *The Town* - to get Bat-jacked. The pair's secret weapon? Wave-loading, or doing multiple sets where the weights and reps vary up and down, to challenge different muscle fibres and force growth. For a chest worthy of wearing the Bat-symbol, try the routine below.

Alternating dumbbell bench press

Lie on a bench holding a pair of dumbbells, and press one overhead at a time, keeping the other chambered at your chest during the rep. Change up your weights and reps as follows.

Set	Reps	Weight
1	8	16kg
2	5	24kg
3	10	22kg
4	15	20kg

15

Hawkeye

AKA Jeremy Renner

Renner's archery technique isn't *that* textbook during the *Avengers* films - he bends his wrist too much, experts say - but the hours of bow-work he put in haven't done his forearms any harm. For similar time-under-tension benefits, use the archer's draw in the gym. Hold a resistance band like a bow, and pull your rear hand back like you're about to fire an arrow.



14

The Vision

AKA Paul Bettany

"There's nothing to the costume - it's like a pair of women's tights," says Bettany of his turn as (spoilers!) the infinity-stone-powered synthetic body of the newest Avenger. "There are huge gaps, so you have to stay in shape... I'm too old to have cheat days now, there's no cheese and beer for Bettany when I'm filming."





Black Panther

AKA Chadwick Boseman

T'Challa, Prince of Wakanda - also known as the Black Panther - is set for his first Marvel appearance in *Captain America: Civil War* before getting his own film in November 2017. Boseman's been in physical prep for the role since 2014, but he's no stranger to transformations, having been through a gruelling regime to play groundbreaking baseball star Jackie Robinson. Use deficit press-ups, with your hands on weight plates, to mimic his chest-building routine.

12

Daredevil

AKA Charlie Cox

British actor Cox went on a bulking diet to play Marvel's blind crimefighter. "I started eating tons of chicken, broccoli, sweet potato, rice and pasta," he says. "I put carbohydrates in all my protein shakes, so I'd have a shake with sweet potato in it. It's actually surprisingly nice."

11

The Punisher

AKA Jon Bernthal

Bernthal, set to play the antihero in the second season of Netflix's *Daredevil*, has previous form as a physical actor: you might remember him slugging it out with zombies in *The Walking Dead*, playing a prize-fighter in *Grudge Match* or punching Shia LaBeouf in *Fury*. As a regular at the boxing gym - he often trains six times a week - leaning out or bulking up while staying in shape is just a matter of adding or subtracting food.

10

Kato

AKA Jay Chou

The Green Hornet's sidekick was originally played by Bruce Lee, so Taiwanese singer-songwriter Chou had some fast-kicking shoes to fill. Fortunately, he shared a secret weapon with the one-time Hong Kong cha-cha champion - his dance training, stunt co-ordinator Jeff Imada says, helped him pick up the fight choreography "without any prompting. He just flowed from one move to the next." The moral? Go to that swing dance class with your significant other - then when it's time for krav maga, you'll both be set.



9

Deadpool

AKA Ryan Reynolds

In his first outing as Marvel's wise-cracking, fourth-wall-busting antihero in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, Reynolds had his mouth sewed shut. Mercifully, that's about to be rectified as Deadpool gets his own film. Reynolds has done a lot of bodybuilding in the past, but now his training's more about function than aesthetics. "As you get older, falling on concrete gets less and less hilarious," says the 39-year-old. "I do a lot of plyometrics, kickboxing... and yoga."

8

Luke Cage

AKA Mike Colter

He's had a few shirtless scenes in *Jessica Jones*, but Colter is set to be a bigger name in 2016 as the focus of Netflix's *Luke Cage*. Colter's used to playing imposing men, after a stint as super-soldier Spartan Locke in *Halo: Nightfall*, but to sell Cage's super strength he knew he had to up his game. Mixing his protein sources was key. "I try to get a gram of protein for every pound [half-kilo] of bodyweight, but it gets boring if I just eat chicken," Colter says. His secret to a powerful chest? Use dumbbells for your bench press. "My arms are long so it's easier to lock out when holding dumbbells."

Colter starts every chest session with this routine.

1. Barbell bench press (125kg)

Sets 3 Reps 8

2. Dumbbell bench press (40kg)

Reps To failure

3. Barbell bench press (125kg)

Sets 2 Reps 10

4. Dumbbell bench press (40kg)

Reps To failure

7

Owlman

AKA Patrick Wilson

Watchmen's most relatable hero didn't actually need a six-pack - since being forced into "retirement", he's actually supposed to have a touch of the dadbod - but Wilson still had to be able to fight in what he says "felt like a scuba suit". The actor's workout included renegade rows for a fat-burning, muscle-building double-whammy: get into a press-up position on a set of dumbbells and "row" one up to chest height after every rep.



Captain America

AKA Chris Evans

For Steve Rogers, becoming America's first Avenger took a syringe of super-soldier serum.

For Chris Evans, it meant chicken. Industrial quantities of chicken. "The aim was 2g of protein per pound [half-kilo] of bodyweight," he says. "I'd eat constantly, including dark, leafy greens with every protein source, and a casein shake before bed."





Iron Man

AKA Robert Downey Jr

Downey's spent more than a decade training in the martial art wing chun, but for his appearances as Tony Stark he had a big (iron) suit to fill. To do it, he and trainer Brad Bose used old-school strongman moves, including sledgehammer swings and weighted wheelbarrow pushes, but also modern training methods such as the earthquake bench press: by hanging two kettlebells off the bar from stretch bands, this move challenges and builds the stabiliser muscles in the pecs (see p23).



Captain Boomerang

AKA Jai Courtney

OK, so *technically* he's a villain, but the Antipodean arch-criminal goes sort-of-good alongside Jared Leto's Joker and Will Smith's Deadshot in the upcoming *Suicide Squad*. The team have been training with Gym Jones trainer Pieter Vodden to get in shape. Courtney's favourite workout? The squat breathing ladder. "Pick a decent weight and squat it once," he says. "Put it back, take one breath. Repeat with two squats and two breaths, and repeat all the way up to 20." Vodden, incidentally, does this with 80kg: you should aim lower.



The Flash

AKA Grant Gustin

As you'd expect of a long-distance runner, Barry Allen, aka The Flash, is not the most hulking of heroes. Although he packed in press-ups and pull-ups, Gustin spent most of his workout time with Olympic coaches to make his running more efficient. Follow the tips in the box below to do the same .

Lean forward

"When you run, imagine you're breasting the finish tape," says Hybrid Running creator Alex Viada. "This keeps the head up, spine erect and shoulders back, and stops the feet striking far out in front of the body. A sagging head and shoulders result in a floppy, inefficient gait."

Transformer arms

"Keep your arms like Optimus Prime," says Viada. "They should be nearly fixed against the body, elbows at around 80-90°. Don't 'punch' the air as you run - the rotation should be slight and begin at the shoulders, with the arms moving relatively little against the sides."

Run on ice

No, not literally. "Pounding the ground as you run imparts tremendous strain on the body," says Viada. "Over-exaggerate your joints' absorption of the impact and try to land as silently as possible - this encourages a midfoot impact and prevents overstriding."



Thor

AKA Chris Hemsworth

“He is Thor,” says Chris Evans of his *Avengers* co-star, who stays in godly shape with a combination of old-fashioned volume training and heavy kettlebell workouts. For a five-minute fat blast, try double-kettlebell squats, Tabata-style: rest the bells on your forearms and do as many reps as possible in 20 seconds, rest for ten seconds, and repeat for eight rounds.

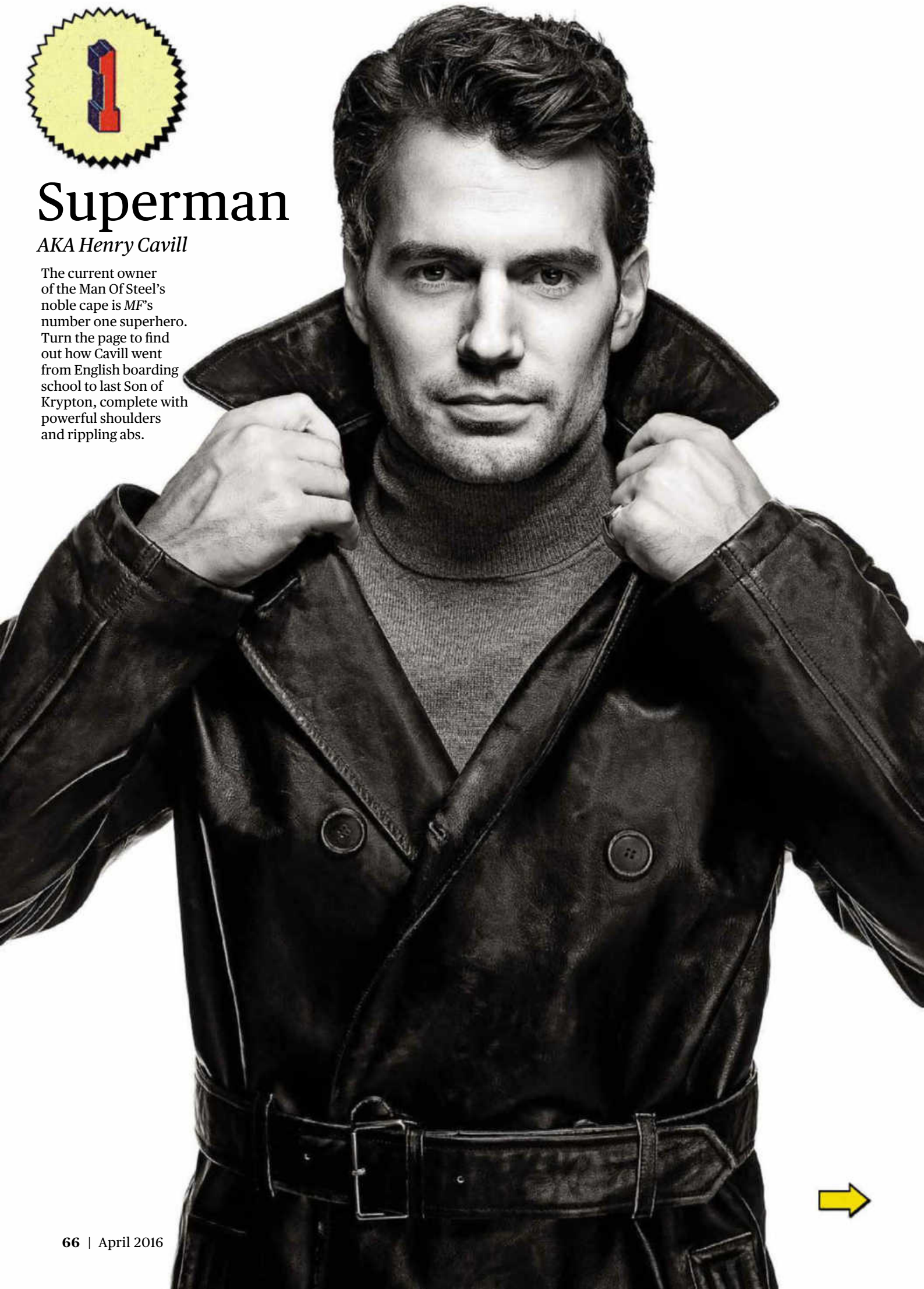




Superman

AKA Henry Cavill

The current owner of the Man Of Steel's noble cape is *MF*'s number one superhero. Turn the page to find out how Cavill went from English boarding school to last Son of Krypton, complete with powerful shoulders and rippling abs.





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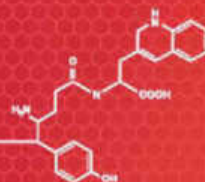
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Beneath The Cape

He's the English gentleman who became Hollywood's all-American hero. MF meets Henry Cavill to talk boarding school, screen sex and how he builds his superhero body

Words Andrew Harrison
Photography Doug English



I'm having an afternoon beer with Superman.

We're sitting in the beer garden of a pub in Twickenham, west London, and 32-year-old Henry Cavill - the man who currently plays the last son of Krypton onscreen - is drinking his second pint of lager top and radiating contentment. In a shapeless dark green Royal Marines hoodie (his brother Nik is a lieutenant colonel who's served in Afghanistan and Iraq), he's also sporting a wildly tangled beard that would guarantee his anonymity had he not spent much of 2013's blockbuster *Man of Steel* sporting, well, a wildly tangled beard. But no-one bothers him. We are far from Hollywood, in every sense. "If I suggested to an American journalist that we do an interview over a beer," says Cavill, "they'd find it very weird."

Although he was born on the idyllic, partially French-speaking Channel Island of Jersey, Cavill was educated at Buckinghamshire boarding school Stowe and embodies a certain type of Englishman you might call "officer class". Men with Cavill's privileged upbringing and schooling are often accused of being snobs. But they're just as often described as steadfast, honourable and unfailingly polite. Cavill is the latter. He is a gentleman. He is old-school.

So it came as something of a surprise, at least in the UK, when Cavill was cast as arguably the most American hero of all in *Man of Steel*, director Zack Snyder and producer Christopher Nolan's dark, controversial take on the Superman origin story - although Cavill's controlled moral turmoil does suggest that Superman's true superpower is that most British of virtues, a stiff upper lip. His compelling performance established Cavill as an A-lister, cementing his spot in 2016's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, in which he squares off against Ben Affleck's Dark Knight - and his heroic physique, which he had to work phenomenally hard to attain, played just a big role.

While building Superman's body took discipline and control, those have't always been watchwords for Cavill. When he was a boy, his father Colin, a stockbroker, once returned from a trip to find that the family home had been redecorated. Why was there an ugly new wallpaper on the walls? he asked his wife, Marianne. "Oh, that?" she said. "It's easier to clean the blood off."

With five boys at home - Henry William Dalglish Cavill being the fourth - Cavill describes the household as "boisterous. No face punches - we'd just bounce one another off the furniture and occasionally draw blood. But all in good humour."

As a stereotypical middle child, Cavill often found himself lost in the family crowd. "I wanted to do right by everyone and follow the rules. Pretty boring, actually!" he says, laughing. "This is probably why I was so unpopular at school, because I was clearly such a wanker."

Cavill loved growing up amid the quiet countryside of isolated, prosperous Jersey, but as he approached his teens he

began to feel trapped on the small island. He was desperate to leave for boarding school like his brothers, but when he arrived at Stowe, he found that all the groups and cliques had already formed. He was an outsider. Plus, the ripped action hero of the future had another problem: he was fat.

"They used to call me Fat Cavill," he recalls. "I was a prime target for them. I actually had rolls of fat on me. One guy told me I had tits. I was a big eater, and I still love food. I'm still an indulger, in

alcohol, in food, in all the things I enjoy in life. I've never been able to do things in half measures. That's probably why I was a fat kid. And yet as much as people made fun of me, there was no actual bullying. I was just miserable and homesick. At boarding school, you get to be your own person, and you grow by yourself. But I will admit I was quite bitter for a while."

Acting gave Cavill an identity. He appeared in school productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Grease* and found he had a talent for the stage. "I liked acting, and suddenly people liked me," he says. "Stowe could have smashed my confidence, I think, but actually it prepared me for the world. If I'd gone to Hollywood without having been hurt on a daily basis at school, I might have been less ready for it."

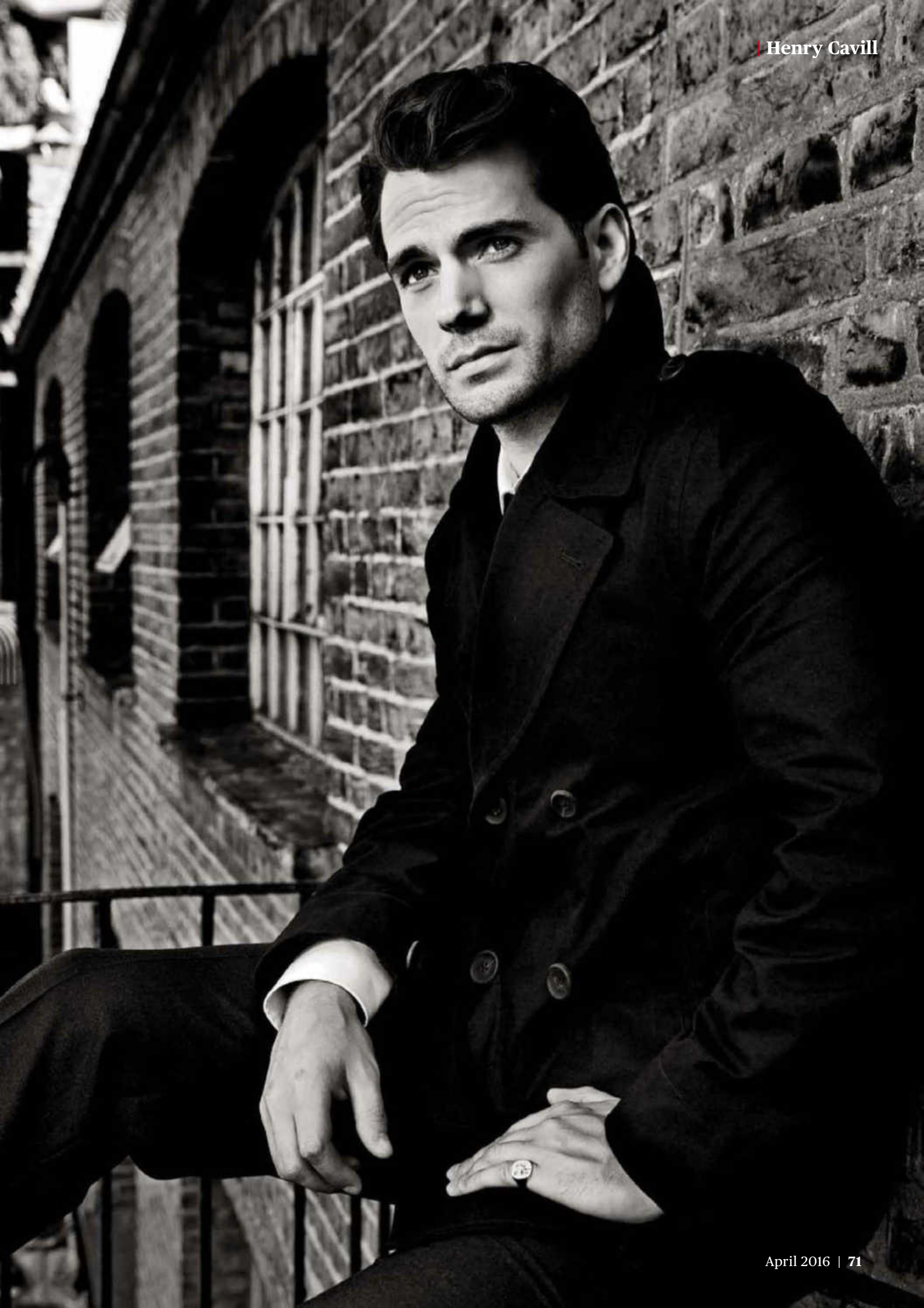
There was one moment at Stowe that changed everything for Cavill, and it's so unbelievable it would strain the credibility of even the sappiest of biopics. In 1999, Russell Crowe - who, coincidentally, would play Cavill's Kryptonian father, Jor-El, in *Man of Steel* 14 years later - came to Stowe to shoot scenes for the thriller *Proof of Life*. The 16-year-old Cavill appeared as an extra, running around the rugby pitch in army cadet gear. During a lull in shooting, he approached Crowe for advice. What was the business really like?

Well, said Crowe, sometimes they treat you really well. Sometimes it's shit. But the money's good and you'll enjoy it. Then shooting resumed. A few days later, Cavill received a package containing Australian sweets, an Aussie rugby jersey and a CD by Crowe's band - plus a photo signed with a message: "Dear Henry, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Love, Russell." Cavill's still got it. When they met again a decade later on the set of *Man of Steel*, Crowe remembered the kid from the English boarding school.

"It's incredible," says Cavill, still seeming bemused. "If you saw it in a film, you wouldn't believe it happened. But it did."

Cavill's first big break was in lurid historical TV drama *The Tudors* in the mid-2000s, produced by Showtime in the US and shown on BBC2 here. Viewers got to know not just his face, but most of the rest of him too. The show was heavy on sex scenes, especially featuring Cavill's character, Charles Brandon, Henry VIII's trusty wingman. No longer fat - in fact, in remarkable shape - Cavill had his chain yanked mercilessly by his brothers over these scenes.

"You don't think of sex scenes as showing your bum to the nation," Cavill says. "It's acutely uncomfortable being naked in a roomful of people. The last thing it is is sexy." He starts laughing. "The actual physicality is very uncomfortable. All you're doing is smacking your nuts against someone, and nothing is going in." I ask him what every guy who's ever watched a sex scene has wondered: has he ever found himself, er, unintentionally →



Suave Cavill was pipped at the post by Daniel Craig for the role of Bond in *Casino Royale*



“It’s not great when you’re in a professional acting environment and somebody gets a boner, is it?”

aroused? “It’s only happened once,” he admits, “and it was very embarrassing. A girl had to be on top of me, she had spectacular breasts, and I hadn’t rearranged my... stuff into a harmless position. She’s basically rubbing herself all over me and, um, it got a bit hard. I had to apologise profusely afterward. It’s not great when you’re in a professional acting environment and somebody gets a boner, is it? No, not acceptable.”

While his role as a 16th-century sex machine raised his visibility, Cavill narrowly missed becoming an even bigger sexual icon. He was one of the final two candidates up for playing James Bond in *Casino Royale*. It must have hurt to lose out on such a life-changing role, I say.

“Of course I was disappointed,” he admits. “But Daniel Craig did a fantastic job, and honestly, I was too young for it. I was about 21. The right thing happened there.” His own vision of Bond had been “slightly more Sean Connery”m he says: an arrogant, cultured bastard with a talent for killing. “But it was the right time for Daniel’s version. His was a real reinvention. I dunno... maybe one day I can take it off his hands.”

If the role of 007 still requires a shredded physique by then, Cavill’s a shoo-in. In *The Tudors* he was in fine shape. But by the time he appeared as Theseus in Tarsem Singh’s action movie *Immortals* in 2011, Cavill was so sculpted he looked as if he’d walked off the set of *300*.

“I didn’t go that way for the sake of becoming an action actor,” Cavill explains. “I want to tell stories. That’s what excites me. But there’s a demand that you look a certain way in Hollywood. *Man Of Steel* was the first time I had to bulk up in the full-on action-movie style, and I’ve got to say, I enjoyed it enormously. Well, it’s torture, but you enjoy it the way you enjoy hard work and the results that work brings. It’s rewarding.”

It’s no secret that the physical demands on modern leading men in Hollywood go far beyond the experiences of actors from generations ago, or even from ten years ago. In fact, today’s A-list nutrition and exercise regimens have more in common with endurance athletes and professional bodybuilders than with classic thespians.

In terms of fitness, the process is simple. There’s a period of gaining mass, when you eat vast amounts of fats, carbs and protein, combined with a heavy lifting regime. That’s followed by a cutting phase, when your calorie intake is drastically lowered and the fat melts away to reveal solid muscle. For *Man Of Steel*, Cavill worked with elite trainer Mark Twight - founder of Gym Jones - to maintain his condition for a shoot of more than 120 days.

“The mass build is the fun part,” says Cavill. “You get to eat a lot, and you’re lifting heavy weights. You feel really good because you’ve got big numbers going on the plates. But you’re always aware that you’ll have to eat less and start breathing more in order to show the muscles and the striations. It creeps up on you. That’s the less fun part.”

A lower calorie intake can also affect your moods. Cavill has to be aware of his temper and tries not to snap at people on the set. It’s only during the final days of the “leaning down” phase that food cravings begin to kick in, he says. Visions of pints of beer and greasy food and chocolate begin to dance in his head.

It’s a physical ordeal and not without risk. While filming *Man Of Steel*, Cavill had reached his optimum minimum of body fat, and then had to spend day after day on a freezing Vancouver helipad for green-screen work.

“I don’t mind hardship. I consider myself reasonably tough,” he says. “But every day? It’s hard.” At one point Twight had to intervene, pulling the star off set and returning him to a heated trailer - he’d noticed that Cavill’s lips were turning blue. The actor sat there and shivered for half an hour. Afterwards, when he thanked Twight, the trainer pointed out that Cavill had been well on the way to hypothermia. He was on the edge. “And that,” says Cavill, “was a mountain climber talking.”

There’s never any pure downtime from this physical effort.

Even during the shoot for 2015’s *The Man from UNCLE* - “you can get away with a lot under a nice suit” - Cavill was prepping for *Batman v Superman*. But he thinks he’s now mastered the pendulum of mass gain, fat burn and recovery. Give him a target date and a reasonable amount of time and he’ll get himself where he has to be. “When I need to do it, I’ll do it,” he says. “But otherwise I’m going to enjoy my life.”

Whether he’ll be allowed to is another matter. The two upcoming *Justice League* movies from the DC Comics stable will extend his Superman commitment to six years - and if the franchise takes off, maybe longer. His dedication to these characters would warm the heart of any comics geek. “They’re the mythological heroes of our day,” Cavill says, “and I want to help tell their stories for as long I can.” While some dismiss Superman as a simple, corny goody-two-shoes, Cavill insists there’s more to him. “The Batman story is easy. He’s dark and brooding and dangerous. Superman, I believe, can be a better story, but it requires ten times the effort to get it right. All I can do is keep my fingers crossed that the big cheeses at the top care as much about the character as I do.”

In the meantime, Cavill has his freedom, including the ability to walk around in relative anonymity. “I can still go out and get shitfaced if I want to,” he says, clearly enjoying the thought. “I’m not going to change my life because of fame. It’s supposed to be a good thing that’s happened to me. I want it to enjoy it.”

Superhero, super spy, noble Tudor swordsman - roles like these could push a guy’s ego to bursting. But it seems life has given Henry Cavill the right education to deal with it all. It turns out that the English values of reserve and hard work are worth something in Hollywood, too.

“There are people who are better-looking than I am,” says Cavill, “and people who are better actors than I am. I just have to beat them to the chase.”

Build super powers

Cavill's programme for *Batman v Superman: Dawn Of Justice* comprised four phases: preparation, bulking, leaning out and maintenance. The bulking phase, demonstrated here, centres on Olympic weightlifting movements - complex but hugely effective lifts that build muscle, strength and power simultaneously. When done in circuit fashion, they're also very demanding on the heart, which in turn boosts endurance.

"There's a misconception that cardio negatively impacts muscle," says Cavill's coach Michael Blevins (gritandteeth.com). "A larger work capacity can allow you to train harder and longer. Building muscle without conditioning is akin to having an impressive engine without a gas tank - it's worthless. This conditioning helped later when trimming fat."

Directions

Perform the workout once per week. Exercises 2A-2E are done as a complex, with a heavy barbell. Do one set of 2A, then without releasing the bar go on to do one set of 2B, and so on for all the moves in the group. Rest, then repeat the sequence for a total of four sets.

■ 1 HANG CLEAN AND JERK

Sets As many as needed Reps Work up to one heavy rep

Stand with feet hip-width apart holding the bar in front of your thighs with hands at shoulder-width. Bend your hips and knees so the bar lowers to just above your knees. Now explosively extend your hips as if jumping while at the same time shrugging your shoulders and pulling the bar straight up in front of you. As the bar reaches chest level, bend your elbows so your palms face the ceiling and catch the bar at

shoulder level with your upper arms parallel to the floor. That's the hang clean. From there, dip your knees and extend them again to power the bar overhead. As it rises, jump one foot in front of you and one foot behind, as in a lunge, to finish the lift in a staggered stance with the bar locked out overhead. Perform as many warm-up sets as you need, gradually building to the heaviest load you can handle for one rep with good form.



■ 2A CLEAN PULL

Sets 4 Reps 1

Stand with feet hip-width apart and bend down to grasp the bar with hands shoulder-width apart. Keep your lower back flat, chest up and eyes looking forward. Pull the bar off the floor, keeping your weight on your heels and your shoulders directly over the bar as it rises. When the bar reaches the top of your thighs, explosively extend your hips, shrug the bar and come up onto your toes. Control the bar back to the floor.



■ 2B POWER CLEAN

Sets 4 Reps 1

Begin as you did with the clean pull, but when you come to the explosive shrug and hip extension, continue pulling the bar up to shoulder level as described in the hang clean and jerk. Catch the bar at your shoulders and immediately begin the front squat.



■ 2C FRONT SQUAT

Sets 4 Reps 1

From the top of the power clean, bend your hips back and lower your body into a squat, keeping your lower back in its natural arch and your elbows raised so your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Extend your hips to come out of the squat.



■ 2D PUSH PRESS

Sets 4 Reps 1

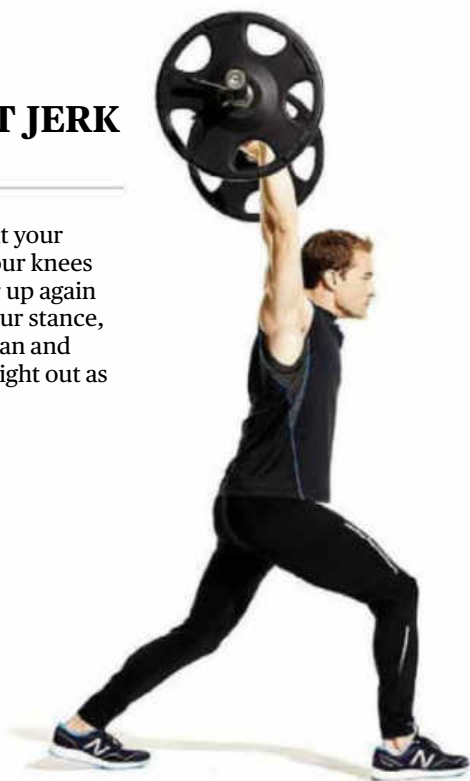
Standing tall, dip your knees and quickly extend them, using the momentum to press the bar straight overhead. Then return the bar to your shoulders.



■ 2E SPLIT JERK

Sets 4 Reps 1

Holding the bar at your shoulders, dip your knees and press the bar up again while splitting your stance, as in the hang clean and jerk. Lock the weight out as your feet land.



■ 3 FRONT SQUAT

Sets As many as needed
Reps Work up to one heavy rep

Perform the front squat as described in 2C, taking as many warm-up sets as needed to reach a load that allows you only one rep with good form. Do no more than ten total reps to reach your max to conserve energy. For example, do two reps each at about 50% and 70% of your max, and then several single-rep sets as you close in on the right load.



■ 4 FRONT/BACK SQUAT COMBO

Sets 3 Reps 7 front, 13 back

Now that you know your max front squat, use 70-75% of it and alternate sets of front and back squats. So if your max front squat was 100kg, use 75kg. Do seven reps of the front squat, then rack the bar. As soon as possible, do 13 reps of back squats. That's one set.

To perform a back squat, squeeze your shoulder blades together and nudge the bar out of the rack. Step back and stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes turned out slightly. Take a deep breath, bend your hips back, then bend your knees to lower your body as far as you can without losing the arch in your lower back.



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VERTICAL

Among mountain runners, the Vertical Kilometre - a race that finishes 1,000m above the start line - is the new standard of endurance, and in 2016 it comes to the UK. *MF* gets involved



Words Matt Maynard

The first time I saw the vertical men was on a chilly spring evening in 2011 in the French Alps. A battalion of them came charging up under the chairlifts, like sharp coloured pencils fresh from the box.

“Allez, allez, allez!” roared the crowds. The Vertical Kilometre runners were hurtling onto the mountain at 30-second intervals from a marquee in the centre of Chamonix. Cowbells rang out above, while alpine horns blew news of the lactic acid wars raging on the mountain. I watched entranced as these uphill athletes climbed a thousand metres towards the peak of Mont Blanc, taking little more time than the ski lift itself. By the time the last of those surging figures disappeared, I knew I had to run the Vertical Kilometre.

The story of the Vertical K begins with an Italian mountaineer called Marino Giacometti. By the early 1990s, most of the world’s first ascents had been achieved and pioneers were thinking about more creative ways to tackle a summit. Giacometti was part of a new movement attempting daring speed records, as was Swiss athlete Pierre-André Gobet, who in 1990 set a time of 5hr 10min to reach Mont Blanc’s 4,809m summit – the first in a series of what became known as Fastest Known Times, or FKTs, from base to peak. Shortly after, Giacometti established the Federation for Sport at Altitude – later the International Skyrunning Federation (ISF) – with co-founder Lauri van Houten.

Support came from sports brand Fila, and Giacometti set up a lab to develop equipment for his hand-picked team of skyrunners. A whirlwind of global races followed: Nepal, Tibet, the Rocky Mountains, Mexico, Mount Kenya. Dressed in Day-Glo headbands, wraparound sunglasses and crampon-fitted shoes, these athletes ran up 5,000m peaks (and down again) to rapturous applause from ever-growing crowds.

But it was back home in Italy – in Breuil-Cervinia, at the foot of the Matterhorn – that in 1994 Giacometti and Van Houten cemented the concept of a new race: Vertical Kilometre. “The idea was to have a short distance to entice runners from other fields to try a taste of skyrunning,” Van Houten tells *MF*. While the race was only 4km long, they were sending competitors up gradients that reached 60%. Although VK did attract enthusiastic entrants, it remained a quirky backwater of elite mountain running.

I had certainly caught the bug, though, and within a few months of witnessing the spectacular Chamonix race I was preparing to tackle my own mountain. I

wasn’t quite ready for the full Vertical Kilometre but in 2012 I travelled to Vancouver, Canada, to take on Grouse Mountain, considered one of mountain sport’s classic tests of endurance. Just 15 minutes’ drive from the city centre, the Grouse Grind trailhead has a height gain of 853m and an average grade of 31% (a standard treadmill’s maximum incline is around 15%).

Before taking on the challenge I spoke to American ultrarunning legend Nikki Kimball, who has won many of the world’s hardest races (Marathon de



The Torres del Paine National Park in Chile is a spectacular location for a VK – but the terrain makes it tough going

Sables, Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc and Western States 100-mile Endurance Run) as well as being an experienced mountain runner. “Don’t try to run everything,” was her advice. “Be alert with your effort levels.” Sensible advice, but hard to obey – especially since I found myself at the bottom of Grouse Grind alongside Canadians of a wide age range, clearly thinking nothing of climbing Grouse as a regular weekend activity. In my eagerness to get ahead of septuagenarians and schoolchildren, I set off way too fast,

“BY THE EARLY 1990S, MOST OF THE WORLD’S FIRST ASCENTS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AND PIONEERS WERE THINKING ABOUT MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO TACKLE A SUMMIT”



and before long my charge was sending me into the irrecoverable red zone.

Once I realised, I throttled back into a power walk and gradually started to breathe more regularly. When going uphill, running with short steps can feel less tiring than employing long walking strides - but according to a 2015 study in the *Journal Of Applied Physiology*, on inclines steeper than 28%, athletes can reduce their energy expenditure by walking rather than running at the same speed. And there's a fringe benefit: walking enables running-specific muscle fibres to rest and recover, which helped me during the slightly flatter final 200m of the Grind.

I finished strong, dipping my electronic tag for a time good enough to make it to the day's leaderboard on the screen at the cable car station. I wasn't quite a Vertical Kilometre hero yet, but I was getting closer. With a little more training and mountain experience, I knew, I would be ready for the full challenge.

Around the same time as I took on the Grouse Grind, skyrunning and the VK were starting to break out of their niche.

"We weren't prepared for a 20-year wait," Van Houten says, "but we always believed in it and just ploughed on." Social media had caught on, and images of minuscule figures powering through imposing landscapes began to capture the popular imagination.

Crucially, the sport also had a new poster boy. Kilian Jornet was redrawing the line between mountaineering and running and was taking the sport by storm. Between July 2013 and December 2014, the young Catalan runner - he's still only 28 - set ascent and descent records for Mont Blanc (smashing Gobet's time by 13 minutes), the Matterhorn and the highest peaks in North and South America, Denali and Aconcagua.

VK runners, from top: record holder Urban Zemmer, Nikki Kimball, Paul Navesey, British VK race director Shane Ohly and Jeff Browning

National Geographic named him Adventurer of the Year for 2014 and his book *Run Or Die* became an international best-seller. Perhaps not coincidentally, in the three years from 2011, VK Chamonix race entries

doubled and the number of runners going sub-42min more than quadrupled.

One of those was Italian athlete Urban Zemmer. In October 2014, at the 1.92km Fully race in Switzerland, Zemmer became the first person to ascend 1,000m in under half an hour with a time of 29min 42sec. In the vertical plane, he is now the fastest man in the world. Yet Zemmer only started in the sport at the age of 33 on doctor's orders to rehabilitate after an injury.

I asked him how he did it and if anyone could become the Usain Bolt of mountain sport with hard work. "The training does its part," Zemmer says. "Being in tune with the needs of your body





and avoiding the distractions of other people's expectations are essential." Good news. These were all elements I could control. "My talent, however, is a gift of birth," Zemmer adds candidly, calling it "an inheritance that cannot be substituted for anything else".

Had I really been beaten at birth? I decided that while I might not be threatening Zemmer's astonishing record, that wouldn't stop me attempting a respectable VK. It was time to get serious. I registered for the 2015 UTTP Vertical Kilometre, taking place in Patagonia on the three peaks making up the eighth wonder of the natural world: Torres del Paine.

Although, as it turned out, I could have stayed at home and had a go. Rumours had been rumbling in the Scottish Highlands: the UK was to get its first VK.

Climber turned mountain runner Shane Ohly, race director of Ourea Events, confirmed it, setting the date in September 2016. "The race is accessible to everyone," Ohly told me. "It's not too technical like some other VK races. There's plenty of space to overtake and it's an advantage to start at the back because every time you look up, there's someone to chase down and focus on."

Arriving exhausted at the end of a big city marathon is one thing. Collapsing incapacitated at one of the most isolated mountain summits in the world is another. Condors circle the summits in Patagonia, searching for meat to feast on. Herds of guanacos

While some VKs are under 2km in length the Torres del Paine race is 4.5km, which means the incline is less punishing

graze, alert to mountain lions stalking the slopes looking for the weakest of the pack. I needed to know how long I would be on the mountain for - and how I would feel when I reached the finish.

Former 50km treadmill world record holder Paul Navesey, who was the fastest Brit at the 2014 Chamonix VK, gave me some much-needed advice.

"The time taken to run a VK is similar to a 10K race. The difference is the impact on the body - it's far less." This bolstered my confidence about being able to walk back down the mountain afterwards. Navesey also explained that landing with my weight directly over my foot (as opposed to the typical long stride of the flat runner) would reduce my chance of injury and increase my rate of recovery. But in case that made it sound easy, he was quick to remind me of the intensity of the challenge. "Despite those smaller steps, keep the same fast leg speed as in a 10K effort. This will keep you moving upwards as fast as possible."

"IT WAS HARD, AND IT WAS UNPLEASANT, AND I WANTED TO STOP MORE THAN ONCE. BUT AFTER NEARLY AN HOUR ON THE TRAIL, I PASSED UNDER THE FINISH LINE FLAGS"

The Patagonia course is among the longer VKs at 4.5km, which makes it quite runnable. It's also spectacular, which provided a welcome distraction



GET VERTICAL

If your running career's looking up, try one of these

from the difficulty. As the trail grew steeper I switched to walking. Noting with satisfaction that the competitors in front of me who continued to run seemed to be treading in treacle, I slowly began to reel them in with a steady, grunting power hike. I had walking poles, and had practised placing them out in front as a counterbalance to my lead foot. ISF research has shown that, when properly used, poles reduce energy expenditure, improve balance and assist uphill thrust.

As Navesey had predicted, I was breathing so hard I didn't have the desire or ability to get any food down - instead I just drank regularly from my handheld water bottle. I was glad, though, to have had his recommended pre-race breakfast of soaked oats and honey, which kept the fires burning all the way to the top. It was hard, and it was unpleasant, and I wanted to stop more than once. But after nearly an hour on the trail, I passed under the finish line flags. It wasn't the fastest VK on the planet. But I was now officially a vertical man.

Full of enthusiasm, I called Ohly to let him know I'd be taking part on Am Bodach in September.

"Great!" he said. "Kilían Jornet has said he's keen, too."

Oh well - I wasn't *really* expecting to win anyway.



Marathon du Mont Blanc VK

27th June, Chamonix, France

- Entry is now open for your chance to run up the tallest, most awe-inspiring mountain in western Europe - just a short plane journey from the UK. montblancmarathon.net



Cervino Matterhorn X-Trail VK

8th July, Breuil-Cervinia, Italy

- Ascend 1,000m where the sport was born - on one of the Alps' most formidable peaks. The 2016 race introduces a Negativo version (down as well as up). cervinoxtrail.com



Am Bodach VK

16th September, Kinlochleven, Scotland

- The Glen Coe Skyline event - part of the Skyrunner World Series - now has a Vertical Kilometre race, the first (and so far only) one you can do in the UK. glencoeskyline.com



KM Vertical de Fully

October (date TBC), Fully, Switzerland

- The shortest VK course there is - both the men's and women's VK records were set here in 2014 - but that means it's the steepest, so prepare for an assault on your leg muscles. teamlatrace.ch/km/en



Ultra Trail Torres del Paine VK

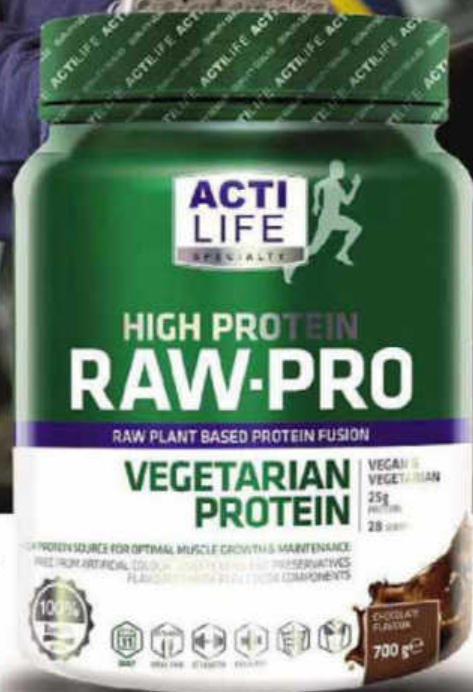
October (date TBC), Patagonia, Chile

- The Alps are one thing - racing through this remote, desolate range is another. If you're prepared to travel, you'll be well rewarded. ultra trailtorresdelpaine.com

Photography Alamy, iStock



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04/16

Fuel

Get fit in
the kitchen

Your
new
favourite
superfood

Move over quinoa

*Next time you're craving
carbs, try freekeh -
a heartier, tastier,
healthier option →*

Freekeh has been waiting a couple of millennia for its moment in the spotlight, and it's finally arrived. This ancient grain (meaning it hasn't been altered and hybridised over the years) with Middle Eastern origins could well supplant quinoa as the go-to healthy carb.

"It's very versatile - the perfect carb to help you get lean," says trainer and dietician Jim White (jimwhitefit.com). Freekeh has a low glycaemic index score, meaning it has less of an effect on your blood sugar, which prevents the spikes that spur snack cravings. "And complex carbs help rebuild muscle," White says.

It's as easy to cook as quinoa and brown rice but has far more fibre and a more robust flavour, as the wheat is fire-roasted after harvest, giving it a smoky taste. Toast it and add it to salad or yogurt, or have it for dinner with chicken, fish or steak. "Or get creative - freekeh can be made into vegetarian burgers and soups," says White.



Get your freekeh on

To cook, just add it to water in a 2:1 water-to-grain ratio and simmer for 20 minutes. Try this dish created by chef Gerardo Gonzalez (elreynyc.com).

Sesame freekeh with seared prawns

Ingredients (serves 4)

3 plums, diced / 80ml rice wine vinegar / 450g large prawns / 160g freekeh (uncooked weight), cooked / 200g celery, sliced / 50g spring onion, sliced / 85g sesame seeds, toasted / 2tbsp chopped coriander / 1tbsp chopped mint / 120ml sesame oil / Salt

Directions

Season the plums with salt, cover with vinegar and leave until the plums turn bright red. Blitz in a blender till smooth. Sauté the shrimp on the hob. Mix the freekeh with the plum sauce (reserve a small amount), celery, spring onion, sesame seeds, mint and coriander. Toss the mixture in sesame oil until glossy. Top with prawns, plus chilli flakes, lemon juice and zest if liked, and the remaining plum sauce.

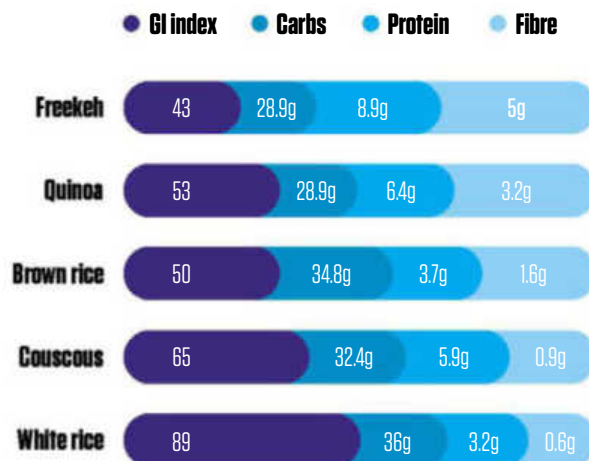


You can get Artisan Grains Greenwheat Freekeh from Tesco, £1.60 for 200g

Grains by the numbers

Nutritionally, freekeh beats all other popular grains, with more than twice the protein of brown rice

All values based on a 40g serving (uncooked weight)





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5 knives every man should own

Just using one knife for all your food prep? It's time to up your game with these essential blades

1 CHEF'S

"This versatile knife will handle most chopping jobs, including chiffonade (cutting leafy veg into long strips), so it's worth buying a high-quality one that'll last," says Saleem Ahmed, head chef of the Drawing Board in Leamington Spa (thedrawingboard.pub).
Oxo Good Grips Pro Chef's Knife, £24

2 BREAD

"An example of perfect design that does what other knives can't, thanks to its large, serrated teeth that will rip through even the coarsest rustic loaves."
Anolon Advanced Bread Knife 22cm, £30

3 SLICING

"With a long and slightly flexible shaft, this is your go-to tool for dissecting meat and fish (raw or cooked). It'll give you a clean cut without scoring your food."
Robert Welch Signature Flexible Slicing Knife 30cm, £56

4 PARING

"The smallest knife in your arsenal is perfect for prepping fruit and veg, especially intricate jobs such as carving florets out of cauliflower or taking the stalks out of tomatoes."
Lion Sabatier Fully-Forged Paring Knife 10cm, £30

5 CHEESE

"This blade curls up to a two-pronged point that helps you pick up cheese from a board after you've sliced it. It's also a great decorative addition to your collection."
John Lewis Classic Cheese Knife, £15

Knife care

Keep yours in good nick for longer by sharpening them on a whetstone once a week, always hand-washing them (instead of using a dishwasher) and occasionally using a honing steel



UPGRADE YOUR PERFORMANCE

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Master your fry-up

When it comes to a full English, selecting the right grub can be the difference between cooking up a fitness-boosting feast and a diet-wrecking disaster. Make the most of your morning treat with our guide to the best (and worst) breakfast eats



1

Poached egg



A complete protein source - meaning it contains all the essential amino acids your body needs - the mighty egg should be the centrepiece of your fry-up, and poaching is by far the healthiest option.



2

Bacon



Enjoy more protein and fewer additives by opting for dry-cured packs of back rashers. Smoked has more chemicals than unsmoked - although the jury's out on whether they're harmful.

The fry-up was voted the nation's best-loved breakfast in a recent poll - over 30% of British people chose it as their go-to morning meal



6

Scrambled egg



Not a fan of poached? Try scrambling instead, ideally with a small knob of nutrient-rich grass-fed butter. A three-egg serving provides over 20g of muscle-building protein, around the same amount as a post-workout shake.



7

Mushrooms



This fungus should be a staple of your full English, thanks to its impressive levels of filling fibre. For bonus points, use fresh shiitakes, which are particularly rich in energy-boosting B vitamins.

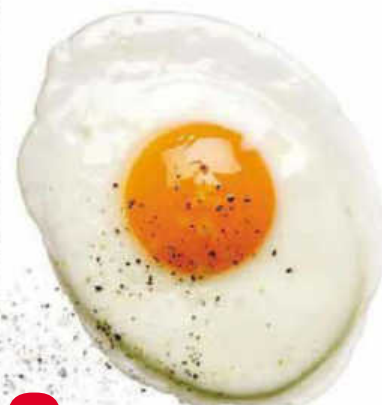


8

Avocado slices



It might seem odd, but adding some creamy green goodness to your brekkie contributes to your daily fruit and veg intake - an avocado supplies around 50% of your fibre RDA - as well as complementing the meaty flavour of the sausages.



9

Fried egg



Probably the least healthy egg option thanks to the calories added by the oil, but it still offers lots of protein and joint-soothing omega 3. For optimal frying (and minimal risk of carcinogens) use coconut oil, which has a higher smoke point than olive.



3

Hash browns

These deep-fried triangles of blood sugar-spiking potato are one of the worst things you can add to your fry-up. For a leaner fix, parboil sweet potato cubes for five minutes, then sauté for another five.



4

Toast

White toast is one of the worst options. It's brimming with blood sugar-spiking white carbs, and even supposedly healthier wholemeal varieties often include hidden sugar. If you can't live without it, opt for Schneider Brot Volkornbrot rye bread (available from Waitrose and Tesco), which is made purely of fibrous grains.



5

Sausages

For a guilt-free meat feast, it's worth shelling out for a pricier option like Abel & Cole's 95% Organic Pork Sausages (abelandcole.co.uk). These contain purer protein-packed pig meat without the nasty trans fats you'll find in cheap supermarket bangers.

Key



Healthy and delicious - an asset to any breakfast



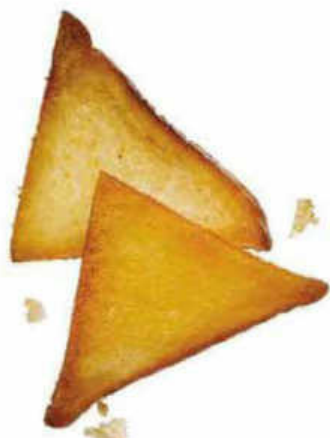
A good option in moderation. Choose the healthiest kind



Some benefits, but there are better options. Eat sparingly



Avoid this food or kiss your abs goodbye



10

Fried bread

How do you make white bread even less healthy? By cooking it in a puddle of calorific oil. For a leaner, more nutritious alternative, swap it for eggy bread by whisking one egg and soaking your slice in it before frying (without oil).



11

Black pudding

It's recently been hyped as a "superfood", but don't let that put you off - the classic British combination of blood, oats, barley and pork fat offers protein and cardio-boosting iron. Don't like the thought of eating pig blood? Try the claret-free white option.



12

Canned baked beans

High levels of salt and sugar ensure that baked beans are anything but good for your ticker. Try this simple DIY version instead: fry one diced onion in olive oil, add a can of tomatoes, 200g cooked haricot beans, 1tbsp tomato purée and a pinch of pepper, and cook.



13

Tomatoes

Vegetables are few and far between in most fry-ups, which is why a grilled tomato should be top priority for yours. They contain impressive amounts of energy-enhancing vitamins A and C.

POWER UP

YOUR

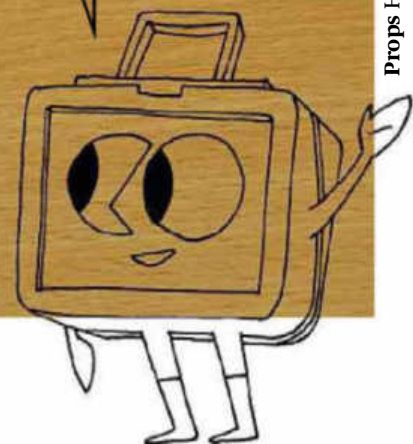
PACKED

LUNCH

FOUR TOP CHEFS, ONE SERIOUS CHALLENGE: MAKE OUR TUPPERWARE-SEALED MIDDAY MEALS WORTH POPPING OPEN, WITH CHEAP, SIMPLE RECIPES THAT TAKE LESS TIME TO PREP THAN A TRIP TO GREGGS

Words Ben Ince Photography Joseph Sinclair
Food styling Maud Eden Illustrations RE Wilkinson

LEAN MUSCLE
IN YOUR
LUNCHBOX!



Props Herblester.com

BULK-UP BROCCOLI

T

he leafy green veggie known

as Chinese broccoli, or kai-lin, is the Cantonese cousin of European broccoli, and contains similarly high levels of immunity-boosting vitamins A and C, which stop your body breaking down after a tough gym session. The recipe here, provided by head chef Owen Sullivan of Maze Grill (gordonramseyrestaurants.com), twins it with protein-packed chicken to assist your muscle-building efforts.

Ingredients

(serves 1)

1 bunch of Chinese broccoli / 1 can of cooked chickpeas / 10 whole almonds / 1 cooked chicken breast, torn into strips / 1tsp honey / 1 lemon / 2tbsp olive oil

To make

Thinly slice the broccoli and fry it in a pan on a high heat for one minute, then add the almonds and cook for a further minute. In a separate bowl, mix the chickpeas, honey, lemon juice, olive oil and chicken. Add the broccoli and almonds and serve.

Almonds contain antioxidants that help to protect against heart disease

BEET THE BLUES WITH A SALAD

This veggie-friendly feast contains a hefty serving of lentils, which increase the brain's production of serotonin, a mood-enhancing neurotransmitter that'll keep you smiling through the tail end of winter. The rocket and piccalilli dressing also give it a "punchy

pepperiness" to help perk up your lunch break, according to nutrition expert and author Dale Pinnock (whose new book *The Power of Three* is out now).

Ingredients (serves 1)

200g can of cooked lentils, drained / Large handful of rocket leaves / Large handful of watercress / 1 cooked beetroot, cut into wedges / ½ an orange, segmented / 1tsp piccalilli / 1tbsp olive oil / Pinch of ground cumin

To make

Place the chickpeas, rocket, watercress and beetroot in a bowl and mix well. Whisk the piccalilli, olive oil and cumin together, dress the salad and toss well, then add the orange segments and serve.

Beetroot contains anti-inflammatory compounds that will soothe your muscles and joints after exercise

FAT-FIGHTING FRITTATA

A posher Italian take on the classic omelette, this spinach-infused recipe - provided by Keith Goddard, founder of Keith Goddard Catering and Munch Food Company (keithgoddardcatering.com) - has virtually no carbs or sugar, providing plenty of lean protein and fibre to fill you up without causing fat storage.

Ingredients (serves 2)

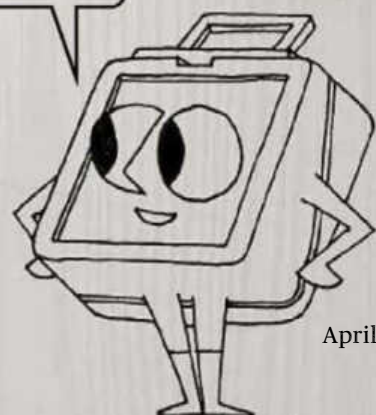
6 eggs / 2 handfuls of baby spinach / 75g feta cheese, crumbled / 4 sun-dried tomatoes, sliced / Salt and pepper, to taste

To make

Whisk the eggs in a bowl, then add the remaining ingredients. Warm a pan, then cook the egg mixture in a little butter over a medium heat until cooked through.



FETA IS RICH IN
SELENIUM, WHICH HELPS
SUPPORT NORMAL
THYROID FUNCTION



POWER UP YOUR
PACKED LUNCH



Crabmeat is a lean source of muscle-building protein, while rocket is packed with vitamin A for healthy skin

ENERGISER ORZO

Bored with rice and pasta?

Swap your regular grains for orzo, a grain-shaped pasta that takes around half the time to cook but provides the same amount of activity-fuelling carbs. Its soft texture and smooth consistency also perfectly complement the crabmeat in the recipe below, provided by Luke Tipping, chef director at Simpsons (simpsonsrestaurant.co.uk).

Ingredients (serves 4)

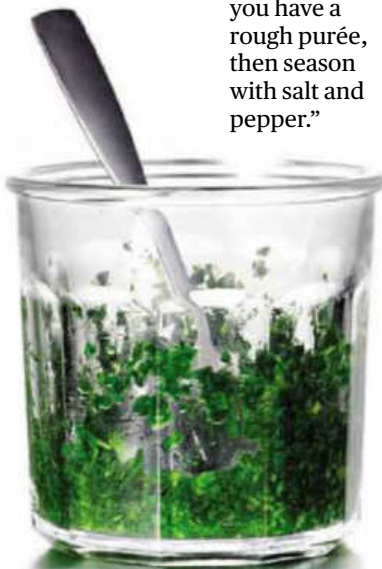
250g orzo pasta / 1 large mild red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced / 1 knob of butter / 300g picked white crabmeat / 100g wild rocket leaves, roughly torn / Fresh parmesan shavings / Green pesto, to taste / Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

To make

Cook the orzo in salted boiling water according to packaging instructions. Drain and set aside. In a medium saucepan, cook the chilli lightly in the butter for a minute or two until softened, then mix in the pesto. Stir in the orzo and fork in the crabmeat. Reheat until piping hot and stir in the torn rocket leaves.

CHEF UPGRADE DIY PESTO

"Pick the leaves off 100g of flat-leaf parsley and blitz them in a food processor with a clove of garlic and the grated zest of a lemon," says Simpson. "Gradually add 3tbsp of olive oil until you have a rough purée, then season with salt and pepper."

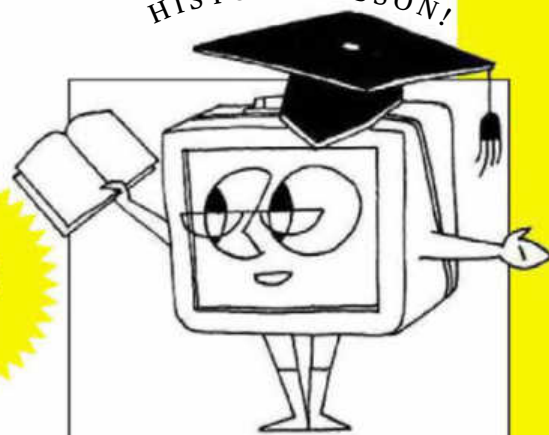


Cold comforts

These simple storage rules will allow you to enjoy Tupperware-friendly leftovers for months - without giving yourself food poisoning

	Fridge life	Freezer life
Pasta	3-5 days	1-2 months
Rice	1 day	2-6 months
Cooked red meat	2-3 days	2-6 months
Cooked poultry	2-3 days	2-6 months
Cooked seafood	2-3 days	2-3 months
Salad	3-5 days	Zero

HISTORY LESSON!



The World's First Packed Lunch, Est. 1746

Packed lunches haven't always consisted of packets of crisps and cartons of Ribena. Before the industrial revolution and the advent of Tupperware, if men wanted to eat during the working day, they had to get creative.

Take the mighty Cornish pasty. This classic pastry parcel came to prominence as a lunchtime favourite among tin miners during the 18th century. The doughy outer casing allowed them to easily carry and consume large servings of hearty meat and cheap, filling vegetables such as potato, onion and swede deep underground or miles out to sea. It was ideal fuel for a gruelling day of manual labour, perfectly packaged in an edible outer (which could always be thrown away if it got too grubby, or contaminated with dangerous metals).

Sadly, the pasty of today is a convenience food of varying nutritional value (unless you actually live in Cornwall), often filled with cheap, processed meat and unhealthy additives. But that doesn't mean you should avoid them altogether.

For a superior muscle-building munch, try a Sainsbury's Taste The Difference Hand Crimped Cornish, which provides 16.5g of protein and just 4% of your sugar GDA - as well as a bonus serving of authentically Cornish root vegetables.

If you're trying to lose weight, go for a West Cornwall Pasty Co Wheatmeal Vegetable, a vegetarian-friendly option that swaps blood sugar-spiking white pastry for the wheatmeal variety to help limit fat storage and control hunger cravings.



Nutritionist Drew Price investigates the state of food on high street Britain to find out what we're actually eating. This issue...

The battle of the burgers

It's official: the burger has gone upmarket. After decades of high street dominance, fast-food giants McDonald's and Burger King have been forced to raise their game by changing tastes and a new breed of "posh" chains such as GBK and Byron, who claim to offer higher-quality grub for patty-savvy consumers. But marketing hype aside, how much actual difference is there between the two tiers of burger joint?

My mission to find out begins at my local Maccy D's. One Big Mac down, I'm actually feeling surprisingly full and content, without any of the lethargy or blood sugar spikes you'd expect after such a sizeable hit of "junk" food. A key reason for this is the quality of the meat. Jamie Oliver may have grabbed headlines by successfully campaigning against the use of ammonium hydroxide (or "pink goo") in US outlets, but stricter EU regulations have long since ensured that British burgers contain only actual beef - usually from cuts such as foreshank and flank - with roughly 20% fat content, the same as you'd find in a standard pack of supermarket mince.

The result is a surprisingly healthy patty that contributes the majority of a Big Mac's 28g of muscle-building protein - the same amount as a typical post-workout shake - and can more than hold its own alongside similar offerings from GBK and Byron.

Leave it alone

The salad that goes on top, however, is a different matter. A combination of production line business models and sheer volume of outlets means the traditional "big two" are forced to use added preservatives and artificial sweeteners to improve the lifespan and palatability of veggies such as diced onions and pickled gherkins, neither of which will do your waistline any



The classic Big Mac



Byron's Double Bacon Cheese burger



A double cheeseburger at The Prince pub in north London



The biggest burger Drew's ever seen - from the Camellia Grill, New Orleans

favours. GBK and Byron on the other hand use fresh, nutrient-rich tomatoes and lettuce, which provide high levels of immunity-boosting vitamins A and C.

It's a similar story with sauces, which account for a significant chunk of the 35g of fat in a Whopper (a third of your GDA) as well as containing large doses of belly-busting added sugar. GBK makes its own, from fresh ingredients, with minimal added sugar.

But despite these discrepancies, the gap in quality between the swankier, pricier brands and their more "junky" forefathers isn't as big as you might expect. And while a trip to either kind of establishment is unlikely to end up being especially healthy considering the abundance of extra menu temptations (think fizzy drinks, fries, milkshakes and beer), as a treat meal you could do far worse.

Meating out

Pick the right burger to boost your fitness goals

Muscle GBK The Mighty

With two patties topped by bacon and mature cheddar, this monstrous burger offers a giant pile of protein to help fuel your bulking efforts.



Fat loss Byron Skinny Classic

Swaps the blood-sugar spiking bun for a fresh, nutrient-packed side salad for the same price.



Binge Burger King Steakhouse Double

Provides an enormous 40-80% of your GDAs for calories, fat, saturated fat and salt in one delicious hit.



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Next-level brews

Upgrade your cuppa and unlock a host of extra health benefits

GREEN

● The tea you'll find most often in healthy eating plans, largely because it helps speed up your metabolism to burn more calories, but it's also packed with potent antioxidants that help to prevent cancer. For maximum impact, drink the matcha variety, made with powdered green leaves.

BEST FOR
ENHANCING
RECOVERY

GINGER

● This herbal tea is a perfect post-gym brew thanks to its powerful anti-inflammatory properties, which help soothe your aching muscles after a tough session. And you don't have to shell out for expensive bags either - simply drop a slice of fresh ginger (or half a teaspoon of the powdered variety) into a cup and add boiling water.

BEST FOR
BURNING FAT

WHITE

● A mild and smooth option - because the leaves are picked when very young - white tea is far lower in caffeine than others at just 15mg per cup, if you want to avoid the risk of becoming jittery. It has high levels of polyphenols, which strengthen the elastin and collagen in your skin to help combat wrinkles.

CHAMOMILE

● Made from the flower of the same name, this sweet beverage has been found to reduce anxiety levels and is often prescribed as a treatment for insomnia. Bonus benefit: it can also alleviate chesty coughs.

BEST FOR
IMPROVING SLEEP

BEST FOR
BOOSTING
ENERGY

BLACK

● The tea used for the good old-fashioned builder's cuppa accounts for roughly three-quarters of the world's consumption, which isn't that surprising considering it has the highest caffeine levels at around 40mg per cup - perfect for fuelling your gym (or construction) efforts.

BEST FOR
DIGESTION

PEPPERMINT

● Feeling the bloat after a hefty meal? This minty brew will improve mobility in your digestive tract to help relieve the symptoms. It's also easy to cultivate the herb in your garden - to make a homegrown cup, all you have to do is dry the leaves and add to boiling water.

BEST FOR
DEFYING AGE

MF SAYS

Ben Ince,
deputy editor

Three cups of tea a day will fend off heart disease and cancer, according to a study published in the *European Journal Of Clinical Nutrition* - but they shouldn't all be of the "milk and two sugars" variety. For optimum all-round health, it pays to mix things up.



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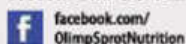
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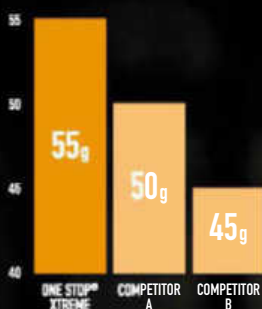
We don't hold back on the formulation. All we would ask is whether you're holding back on the right choice?

THE FACTS

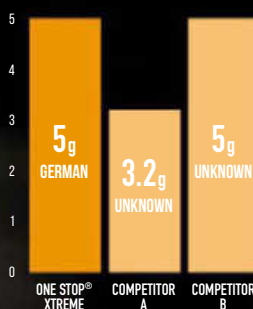
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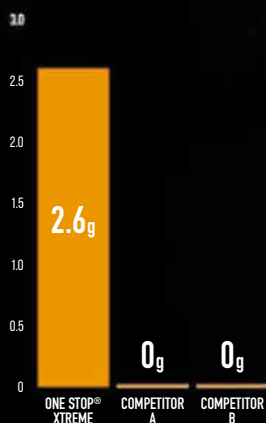
CREATINE CONTENT



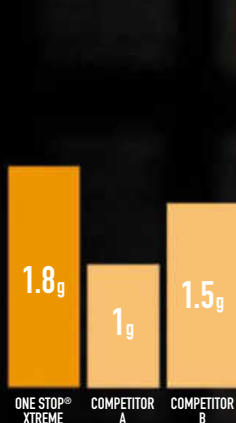
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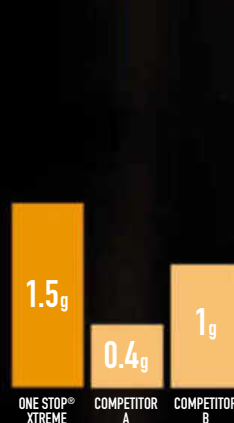
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Ashley "Treasure" Theophane
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Form and function

Everything you wanted to know about weightlifting – but were too busy obsessing over your bench press numbers to ask

Why am I lifting weights?

Resistance training isn't just about getting bigger biceps. It's a perfect elixir for health. "It stimulates muscles to grow, bones to strengthen and fat to break down," says personal trainer Dan Wheeler, whose success in losing 50kg landed him the cover of *Men's Fitness* Australia in 2013. "There are all sorts of hormonal benefits too – as well as spiking testosterone for a healthy libido, it improves sleep quality and quantity, energy and even skin complexion. Exercising improves the turnover of collagen in your skin, and sweating cleans your pores."

The weights room also provides you with the raw materials to transform your mental as well as physical state. "For me it's a form of meditation," says Wheeler, who drew inspiration from the celebrated US fitness model Greg Plitt to pump iron. "It can be really empowering – both physically and mentally – providing a daily dose of achievement every time you complete a rep, set or workout." Identifying your primary goal for picking up a pair of dumbbells will give you the motivation to keep doing it consistently. →

THE EXPERTS



THE COACH AND COMPETITOR

Tom Hamilton, 26

A former Bristol City apprentice whose pro career was ended by injury, Hamilton has competed at national level both in bodybuilding and powerlifting. He coaches at W10 Performance in London, a gym that focuses on improving mobility and posture over abs definition and biceps circumference. *liftstrong*
lookstrong.com



THE TRANSFORMATION SPECIALIST

Daniel Wheeler, 30

Five years ago, Wheeler weighed 140kg. Realising he'd "hit rock bottom", in his words, he vowed to transform his body and health. Within two years he'd dropped to 90kg and set up Life Changing Fitness to help others realise their own fitness aspirations. *lifechanging.fitness*



Do I have to lift heavy?

Your bodyweight is one of the best, not to mention cheapest, tools for resistance training. Besides, not everyone is ready to dive headfirst into the weights rack. Coach Tom Hamilton highlights these strength markers as a guide for whether you're ready to load up:

- 30 press-ups in one go
- Five pull-ups
- A perfect bodyweight squat (heels down, knees wide, back flat)
- Jump explosively

"Ticking all these off would put you above the average population," says Hamilton. "That's a good sign your muscles have plenty of fast-twitch fibres and the capacity to get strong."

3 Should I start with machines or free weights?

Despite its abundant benefits, the weights room can be an intimidating place. With so many bewildering contraptions, the constant clink of iron on iron and all that testosterone sloshing around the room, it's tempting to camp out by the safe haven of the bench press - everyone knows how that works, right?

But resistance machines have a place, especially for the untrained. "They can help you get familiar with which muscles you're working, and allow you to learn technique without the risk of a loaded barbell guillotining you on the bench," says Hamilton.

Once you've used the Smith machine or leg press to learn the movement patterns involved in key lifts, including the chest and overhead press and squats, it's time to upgrade to free weights. Studies show they recruit more muscle fibres, helping you build functional strength for life outside the gym.



Is it worth forking out for a personal trainer?

If you're going to spend the money just once, do it at the start. Laying down a firm foundation by learning proper technique will help you progress quickly - and painlessly. "I jumped in at the deep end with one of Greg Plitt's killer arms workouts," says Wheeler. "I could barely hold a pen for a week afterwards. When I recovered, I set my ego aside and focused on learning the right form for the key lifts, especially the deadlift and squat."

"Choosing the right PT can be a roll of the dice," says Hamilton, who compares it with putting your faith in a new mechanic. Before handing your metaphorical car keys over, get a recommendation from a friend. In fact, if they have good experience at training your friend could be equally valuable. Heading to the weights room with someone familiar in those surroundings can help deflect suspicious glares from gym regulars, and they can also guide you through exercises until you're confident enough to go it alone. They can also save you from the ball-shrinking dread of asking said glarers to spot you. (Although most of the time people are only too happy to help.)



4

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Work up to the essential compound lifts with team MF

STARTING STRENGTH

Deputy editor Ben Ince says "This beginner-friendly plan is a simple but effective introduction to barbell training. Three times a week you get to grips with the squat, bench, overhead press and deadlift. While it can be repetitive, regular progression and weekly PB-setting make it very rewarding."

Typical workout

Squat 3 x 5

Bench press 3 x 5

Deadlift 1 x 5

THE TEXAS METHOD

Fitness editor Sam Rider says "Once you're confident with the core compound lifts, this three-day-a-week plan combining volume, active recovery and intensity will rapidly propel all-over strength. But beware - it can be brutal if you don't recover properly with good food and ample hangover-free rest."

Typical workout

Squat 1 x 5 - work up to a

new 5RM (five-rep max)

Bench/overhead press 1 x

5 - work up to a new 5RM

Power clean 5 x 3

JIM WENDLER'S 5/3/1

Associate editor Joel Snape says "Simple, efficient, hard. You do four 'big' moves a week, hitting pre-determined numbers for a couple of sets before a balls-to-the-wall max rep effort. The (massive) upside: you make noticeable progress with only two days a week in the gym, leaving you plenty of time for hill runs or lying on the sofa."

Typical workout

Bench 3 x 5/3/1

Squat 3 x 5/3/1



SWEATIQUETTE

Blend in with lifting knowledge that normally takes years to accrue, courtesy of our readers

“Squat rack pins: always err on the low side. It’s easier to drop the bar into them than wobble it back in on tiptoe.”

“Grunt as much as it takes to get your best effort out - no more, but certainly not any less.”

“Spotting someone on the bench? Don’t touch the bar unless it starts to move down or they ask for help. Otherwise you’ve just ruined their set.”

“Really, your phone should be on airplane mode. But it’s only a problem for me if you’re sitting on unused kit while you have a chat.”

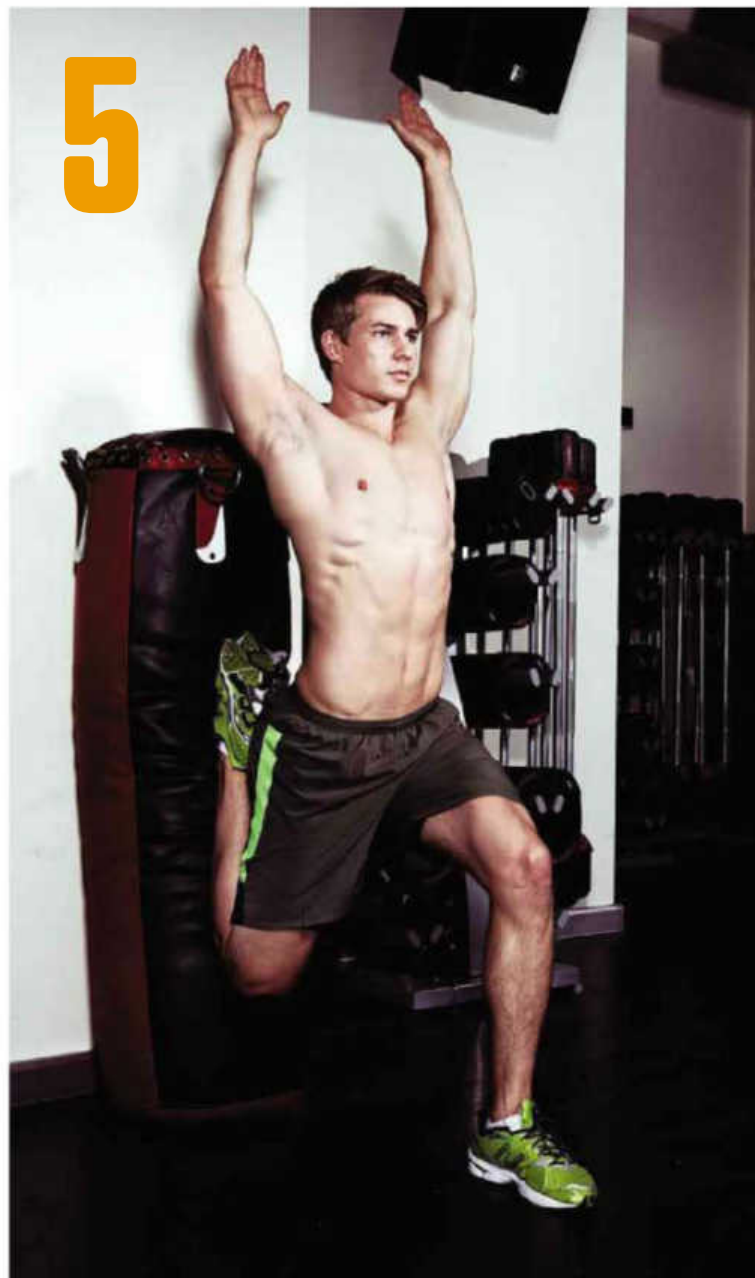
“For the love of God, I don’t want to lie in your sweat. Two seconds and a wet-wrap is all it takes.”

“Curling in the squat rack is frowned upon, but just about acceptable if you’re curling your own bodyweight. A target to aim for.”

Is there a wrong way to warm up?

Yes. The classic: chugging along on the treadmill for ten minutes then hopping on the bench press. “Preparing your body for the specific exercise you’re about to work is far better than getting slightly out of breath,” says Wheeler. So with the bench press, you want to prepare your wrist, elbow, chest and shoulder joints, tendons, ligaments and muscles for pressing before you start loading up the 25kg plates. Do a handful of press-ups and empty-bar presses first. “Increasing blood flow in the area and neurologically stimulating the connection between your mind and muscles will help you lift cleaner, more powerfully and with a reduced risk of injury.”

“Stretching under load will also improve your mobility and range of motion,” says Hamilton. This is especially true if your workout is sandwiched between extensive spells sitting at your desk. Mobilise your hips with pause squats, where you stop for a few seconds when you’re a quarter, half and three-quarters of the way through a rep. Loosen your shoulders by hanging from a pull-up bar for three lots of 30 seconds, and open up your chest with dumbbell flies.



6 Why does it hurt?

If you’ve done any form of resistance training before, chances are you’ve encountered Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness. DOMS is a phenomenon of pain felt 12-48 hours following exercise, typically after workouts with moves you’re not used to. It doesn’t mean you’ve done irreversible damage - according to a paper by strength experts Brad Schoenfeld and Bret Contreras, it’s more likely that you’ve caused “microscopic tears in connective tissue”. It’s one of the key mechanisms - along with mechanical tension and metabolic stress - involved in hypertrophy, the increase in size of a muscle.

7 Is pain a good thing?

You don’t have to hurt to grow, although people can develop a (harmless) pleasure/pain addiction where they don’t feel they’ve worked hard enough if they’re not sore. “The most savage DOMS tends to be from high reps of moves with a big eccentric, or lowering, phase that target the hamstrings and glutes, such as Romanian deadlifts and lunges,” says Hamilton.

You can blunt the trauma by increasing your workload gradually with incremental tweaks in weight, reps or sets. Then help the muscles repair faster with active recovery after a workout to increase blood flow and the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the muscle. For example, after a lunchtime legs workout, avoid stiffening up with Hamilton’s discreet solution: “Sneak off to the disabled toilet every hour to do 20 bodyweight squats.” You’ve always got the emergency cord if you start to seize up.

Does it have to take an hour?

Certainly not. “The most common excuse I get for people dodging the gym is time,” says Wheeler. “It’s utter bullshit. People who say that will always find time to eat poorly, watch crap TV or sink five pints in the pub.” The remedy is better time management – spend five minutes making a packed lunch in the morning so you don’t have to go and buy it, say, enabling you to fit in a workout. And start small. “If you go from zero effort to three 30-minute sessions a week you’re going to see results,” says Wheeler.

To get the greatest benefit, pick compound, multi-joint exercises that work your whole body. This means variations of the squat, deadlift, bench and overhead press. And follow a proven plan rather than cycling through random exercises to make the most of every minute in the gym – on p107 we highlight three programmes that have helped *MF*’s writers make progress.

9 What kit will help me get better?

Weights room floors have hosted everything from muddy Golas to the contents of Derek Zoolander’s wardrobe. It seems that anything goes when it comes to apparel. But if you’re squatting heavy, a crucial swap is to replace your squishy-soled trainers with hard-soled shoes designed for lifting (Converse will work too) that don’t compress.

To check your form Hamilton recommends getting someone to film your technique for lifts such as the squat and deadlift. Visual cues are much easier to comprehend than verbal ones, and you can always upload them to Instagram (tag #mensfitnessuk) for extra feedback.

To track how training affects your physique, Wheeler advises his clients take weekly photos from the front and side and ban the misleading weight scales. “Your bodyweight can move up and down like a yo-yo when under stress or sleeping badly,” he says.

Both swear by the simple training logbook. “Writing down your workout and tracking your lifts and numbers is crucial, whether you’re a beginner or an advanced lifter,” says Hamilton. It’ll ensure you don’t waste time devising a workout on the fly, it keeps you accountable so you don’t slack off and you’ll see in black and white if you’re not progressing.





What's stopping me getting strong?

"A lack of consistency," says Wheeler. "A bad plan done consistently will get you better results than a good plan done haphazardly." Repetition and routine will give you the structure to learn how your body best responds to exercise and help you achieve results.

Consistency outside the gym is just as important. "If you're training for an hour a day you've still got 23 hours to focus on your diet, hydration and sleep," he says. Two things that will immediately help, according to Wheeler, are taking the herbal supplement melatonin, which he says is "proven to improve sleep",

and staying hydrated by reducing your coffee and increasing your water intake. Hamilton uses this formula to calculate how many litres of water you need a day: $\text{bodyweight in kg} \times 0.033$.

At the sharp end for the experienced trainer, Hamilton - who's competed at the British Powerlifting Championships - suggests going to local weightlifting competitions can expose you to an environment that'll help you progress the fastest. "It can be intimidating, but the added adrenaline will see your PBs rocket up," he says. Find out where to get involved via the Facebook groups BDFPA and GBPF.

MASTER THE PRIME MUSCLE

Squats should be part of every gym plan - from beginners to experts - but often poor ankle mobility handicaps your best intentions. Tom Hamilton explains how to put it right

MOBILISE

During your warm-up, massage your calves using a foam roller or hockey ball to loosen knots in the muscle, then do this resistance band drill between exercises. Stand in a split stance with the band wrapped around your leading ankle and attached to something sturdy. Push your leading knee forward against the resistance without lifting your heel. Do 15 reps, holding for two seconds in the stretched position.

STRETCH

Stretch your calves under load on the calf raise or leg press machine. With a moderate weight, allow your calves to flex so your toes come towards you, and hold this position for 30-60 seconds. Repeat this three times.

STABILISE

Elevate your heels with a pair of Olympic weightlifting shoes. Nike Romaleos are a worthy investment if you do heavy squats frequently.



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Jump-start your summer six-pack

Raise your power output to torch stubborn belly fat

If you want to see your abs by the time the sun returns from its extended leave, you need to inject raw power into your fat-loss efforts. Moving dynamically, explosively and at full tilt requires serious effort - which means it burns a shedload of calories, causing you to vaporise unwanted fat every time you hit your body's accelerator.

This circuit from trainer Mishal Dasani (ownyourfitness.co.uk) is framed around the simple plyometric box. "It uses full-body high-energy exercises that'll help you torch fat and move more athletically," says Dasani.

WARNING: HIGH VOLTAGE

This uses a plyo box, but it's not a plyometrics workout - those should be saved for sprint training. Here's how to ensure you're doing a high-tempo session that will help you scorch fat safely

PLYOMETRICS MOVES

GOAL Increase fast-twitch muscle fibres for power

CHARACTERISTICS

Low reps, high rest, max effort

EXAMPLE One-leg triple jump, broad jump, max box jump

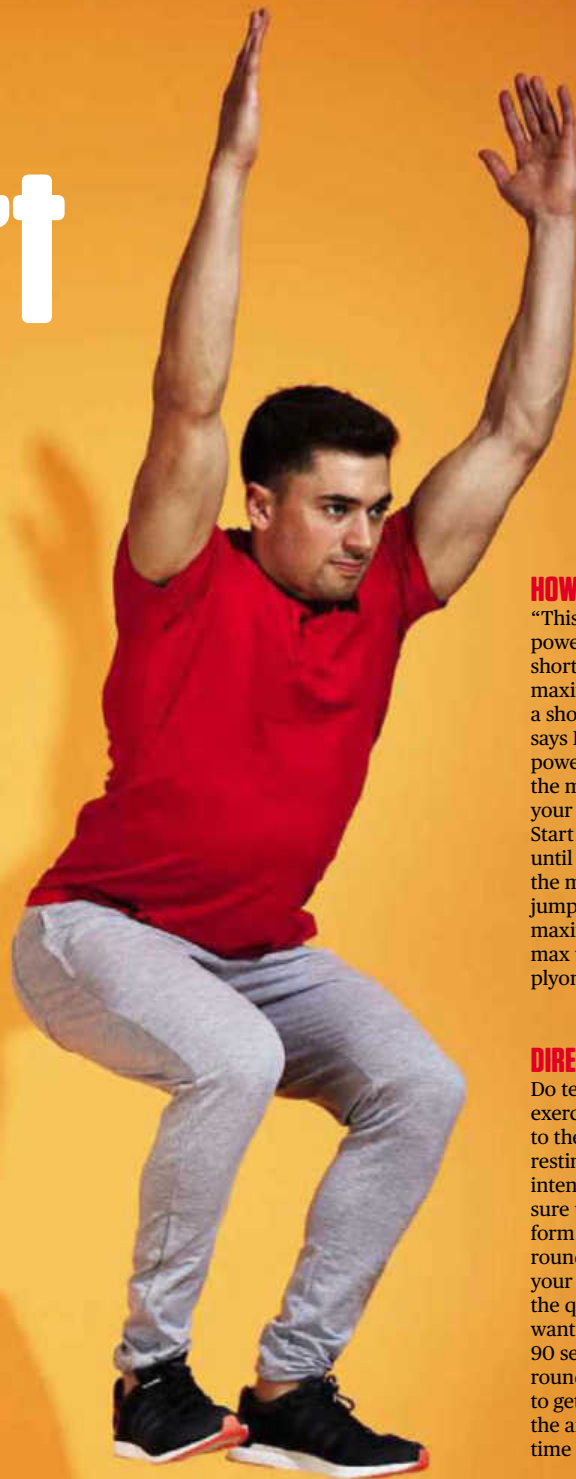
HIGH-INTENSITY WORKOUT

GOAL Raise metabolism to burn calories

CHARACTERISTICS

High-energy, short rest, low impact

EXAMPLE Battle rope slams, burpee, low box jump



HOW IT WORKS

"This workout uses power, speed and short rests to burn maximum calories in a short space of time," says Dasani. The more powerfully you push, the more efficiently your body burns fat. Start with a low box until you're used to the moves but always jump below your maximum. Save your max vertical leap for plyometrics sessions.

DIRECTIONS

Do ten reps of each exercise and move on to the next without resting. Keep the intensity high but be sure to maintain good form. Do three to five rounds depending on your fitness level and the quantity of fat you want to burn. Rest for 90 seconds between rounds but as it starts to get easier, reduce the amount of rest time by 15 seconds.



1 VAULT

Keep your hands on the box as you jump from one side to the other.



! Too easy? Jump laterally on and off the box without using your hands

4 STEP-UP WITH KNEE TUCK

Keep your heel on the box as you drive up and follow through with your knee.



2 EXPLOSIVE PRESS-UP

Squeeze your core to keep your body in line and drive up powerfully with each rep so your hands leave the box.



! Try to keep time in contact with the ground to a minimum

5 DEPTH JUMP

Drop off the box and immediately leap up into the air, tucking your knees in to your body for extra height.

3 BOX JUMP

Use your arms to generate momentum as you jump. After landing on the box with bent knees, stand tall.



! Step down carefully instead of jumping, to protect your achilles tendon

6 V-SIT

Hold the box with both hands for balance and extend your legs out, then tuck them back in to your body.



MF
SAYS



Sam Rider, fitness editor

You can just as easily sub in a bench or even an empty staircase, as I did once (much to the chagrin of the office fire marshals). Don't feel compelled to reach for the biggest plyo box you can manage - start small and keep the energy high.

HOW DID
YOU FIND IT?
#SHARETHEPAIN



5 easy steps to banish moobs for life

Those unsightly chest-bulges aren't just caused by fat. Gynaecomastia - also cruelly known as man-boobs or moobs - is usually down to a hormone imbalance. Restore order with these pec-perfecting tips

1 SPRINT IN BURSTS

Body fat plays havoc with your hormones. According to research in the *International Journal Of Andrology*, adipose tissue causes muscle-building testosterone to convert into moob-growing oestrogen, encouraging fat to lurk on your chest. The urgent fix is to reduce your body fat to a healthy target - aim for under 22%. Three weekly HIIT (high-intensity interval training) sessions will kick-start your metabolism. At the end of a workout, alternate going flat-out and slow in 30 second bursts for 15 minutes on a bike or rower. If your T-shirt's soaked at the end, it's a sign those moobs will soon melt away.

2 LIFT HEAVY

Reducing fat to limit oestrogen will shrink your moobs - and building muscle will hike up testosterone to continue the job. And the heavier, the better. Research in the *European Journal*

Of Applied Physiology And Occupational Physiology found that "heavy resistance exercise" has the greatest T-level payoff. Endless cable chest flies won't alter the appearance of your pecs unless you've got the body fat levels of a cover model. Instead, do compound lifts, especially the deadlift, squat, overhead press and bench press. Start each workout with one of those. Do five sets of five, aiming to lift 75% of your one-rep max.

3 DON'T STARVE

Restricting food intake can undo your testosterone-boosting efforts and even induce a rebounding effect called "refeeding gynaecomastia". The first reported case was during the Second World War when prisoners liberated from camps returned to a normal diet after weeks of malnutrition. It's an extreme case but highlights the risks that can result from following an unsustainable diet. Instead make smart swaps, such as

replacing a glass of fruit juice with a piece of fruit for a vitamin-rich hit of sweetness with all the benefits of fibre intact.

4 SLEEP CLEAN

Poor sleep quality is a leading cause of both weight gain and testosterone depletion. Andrew Shanahan, founder of manvfat.com, believes cleaning up his sleeping habits was key to his losing over 30kg and banishing his moobs. "The day after a bad sleep, levels of the hormone ghrelin, responsible for hunger, shoot up," says Shanahan. This means you're likely to make poor food choices. "Fix this by ensuring your bedroom is clean, uncluttered and comfortable." Use an eye mask and earplugs if necessary.

5 WATCH YOUR SPIRITS

Alcohol is a prime culprit. Not only is it packed with empty calories, but research published in the *Journal Of Pharmacology And Experimental Therapeutics* found that it can suppress testosterone levels. A boozy session can undermine all your efforts, so save it for worthy occasions - and don't let that unwanted cleavage drive you to drink.

Spot reduce fat

Transformation specialist Rich Phillippis highlights the common causes of unflattering fat accumulation

BIG BOOTY MOOBS

Alcohol (oestrogen)

LOVE HANDLES

Low tolerance for carbs

JOWLS

Genetics (sorry)

BINGO WINGS BEER BELLY

Stress (cortisol)

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"Mindful Chef is a healthy recipe kit delivery service, packed with lean and sustainably sourced ingredients. We have created fast, fresh and nutritious meals for the time deprived and health conscious.

"Over 90% of our ingredients are sourced from small, independent suppliers in the West Country,

particularly Devon, where the co-founders grew up. All produce, where possible, is locally sourced in the UK.

"Our fish is landed, our meat is packed and our vegetables come out of the ground on Friday, before being delivered to you on Sunday. Unless you go and pick or catch it yourself, you won't find much fresher."

GO TO → [**coachmag.co.uk/fitnesssurvey**](https://coachmag.co.uk/fitnesssurvey)

The Experiment

Harder,

Group treadmill training is the newest workout trend gaining pace - but will it really make you faster? MF's Joel Snape laces up ➡

faster,

stronger

WHAT IS IT?

With spinning developing into a megabucks business - devotees of New York's celebrity-packed Soul Cycle movement happily pay an eye-watering \$3,500 for a 50-session pack - it's only natural that attention is shifting to the next big thing in group cardio. And heading up the charge right now is group treadmill training.

As with spin, the theory is that everyone can tweak their own workout parameters to make sure they're working at the right intensity for rapid fat-loss and performance results. But - and this hardly needs mentioning - running on a treadmill is quite a lot different from riding a stationary bike. So does it work?

THE METHOD

Equinox Gym's Precision Running is the leader of the UK pack, promising a blend of speed work, hill intervals and core training designed to make you a stronger, more efficient runner. Creator and biomedical science graduate David Silk calls it Balanced Interval Training Exercise (BITE), claiming that its ratio of aerobic-to-anaerobic intervals maximise calorie burn and build speed, all while reducing the stress on the body.

Almost as importantly, especially for the #avotoast and #mindfulness crowd, you don't have to go out in the rain, inhale exhaust fumes or risk getting your #yogapants spattered with mud. As a man whose running route to work involves two dual carriageways and the most congested tube exit in London, I'm instantly sold.

THE TEST

The Precision part of Precision Running, it turns out, rewards the data-inclined pavement-pounder. At the beginning of your first class, you're asked to estimate the top speed you could maintain for a solid 60 seconds on the treadmill - this is the speed you'll base your intervals off for the rest of the session.

After a quick warm-up (lateral steps, high knees and kickbacks, all done on the treadmill) it's straight into the first intervals, and I almost immediately realise I've made a huge mistake. Though starting at 2.7km/h less than the magic number for a minute is fine, bumping up the incline 5% in the next interval is markedly tougher.

We're doing a programme called Boston Blizzard, so called because it mimics running into headwinds in one of America's hillier cities, and as the speeds and inclines creep up with each "block" of intervals, I find myself struggling to hang on. Despite a steady monologue of motivation and technique tips from



Class warm-ups include lateral shuffles on a low-speed treadmill

The other contenders

Project Fit

Walk/Jog/Run is the mantra in an independent class that combines sprints with TRX moves and off-treadmill legwork. All in a room that's lit like a nuclear sub on high alert. project-fit.co.uk

Reshape

1Rebel's take on high-intensity training issues you with your own weights, band and bench, putting four-minute conditioning blasts between treadmill sprints. Oh, and you get a free juice afterwards. irebel.co.uk

Barry's Bootcamp

The Kardashian family's favourite workout combines high-speed sprints with bodyweight moves and full-body dumbbell moves, with occasional guest DJ slots and nightclub-style lighting. barrysbootcamp.com

trainer Anthony “Fletch” Fletcher (done silent-disco style: the class takes place on the gym floor, so everyone plugs their headphones into a receiver that delivers the dance-heavy playlist and chatter directly), by the end of the class I’m not *quite* following the recommended splits, mainly because my legs won’t let me.

One problem with the format soon becomes evident. Unlike spin, where adjusting intensity is as simple as twisting a dial or pedalling faster, my sweaty thumbs occasionally don’t register on the treadmill touch-pad at all, leaving me spending stretches of the class at the “wrong” speed. I’m also more hesitant to push myself to my limit than I would be in a spin class – after all, the worst that can happen when you’re on a bike is getting shouted at by the instructor, but here there’s a very real chance of flying off the back of the treadmill.

THE VERDICT

Somehow I get through, and in subsequent sessions I adjust my starting pace to a speed that lets me follow the format more closely and run faster overall, with less panic-breathing. I also start to enjoy the camaraderie of the class, or at least try to match the pace of my more competitive treadmill-mates (plenty of people, I swiftly realise, are happy to finish the class at dog-walk pace without breaking a sweat).

Pleasingly, each class also concludes with 15 minutes of strength work and stretching, including glute bridge and plank variations designed to wake up and strengthen the muscles that make you a more efficient runner. It’s the sort of thing I should do regularly but actually never make time for, and a nice addition to a class that already sees me pushing myself harder than most of my solo runs.

Honestly, no group treadmill class is ever going to entirely replace outdoor running – there’s nothing quite like trotting through a frosted field on a crisp winter morning, and even dodging bankers on the way to work has an air-punching edge to recommend it – but in a few short weeks, my top-end speed’s gone up and my fear of lung-busting hard work has gone down. Now, if they can just sort out the soundtrack...

THE BREAKDOWN

For any fitness level ✓	Technique advice ✓
Lose fat ✓	Available nationwide ✗
Build muscle ✓	Sociable benefit ✓
Improve performance ✓	No membership required ✗
Under 30min ✗	
Track performance ✓	

SCORE
7/10

The classes finish with core work and stretching

“I’m hesitant to push myself to my limit... there’s a real chance of flying off the back of the treadmill”

Membership at Equinox Gym in London starts at £200 a month



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Your V-shape starts here

Big weights are unnecessary. The path to shirt-filling shoulders starts with your tiniest dumbbells

Want bigger shoulders? Think small. Yes, your deltoids can handle appreciable amounts of weight, but consider risk/reward for a second: they're also wrapped around one of the most injury-prone joints in your body, and once you blow a rotator cuff there's not much you can do about it.

Instead of hoisting the heaviest barbell possible aloft, then, the solution is to give them a hefty amount of time under tension - and the double-whammy workout here does just that, while keeping them safe.



You can get results with a set of dumbbells not much heavier than a bag of sugar

HOW IT WORKS

This workout's designed to challenge the stabiliser muscles of your rotator cuff and then hit the delts from three different angles, making sure they grow in every direction. Result: impressive, injury-free shoulders.

DIRECTIONS

Start with the push press: do ten to 15 reps over 30 seconds, then "rest" for 30 seconds with the weights held overhead. Repeat once for a two-minute set. Rest properly for two minutes, and do the whole thing twice more. Next, do 12 reps each of moves 2a, 2b and 2c without resting, then rest for one minute and repeat three times. If your shoulders feel toasty at the end, you've done it right.

1 30/30 push press

Hold the weights by your shoulders, then lower into a quarter squat.

Push up through your heels and press the weights overhead, then lower them under control. The "hold" is the challenging part, so use a weight that allows you to complete the move easily. During the hold, keep your midsection tight and brace your glutes to keep your lower back aligned and safe.



2a

Lateral raise

Start with the weights at your sides, then raise them to the sides, keeping them in line with your body and keeping your thumbs pointing slightly downwards. Stop just shy of shoulder-level to keep the tension on your delts.

2b

Front raise

Switch the focus to your front delts. Starting with the weights in front of you, slowly bring them up to just below eye level. Pause at the top, then lower slowly, keeping the weights under control.



2c

Reverse flye

With a slight bend in your arms, bend forward at the waist - back straight, please - and bring the dumbbells up as if you were flapping your wings. Bring them back to the centre to complete the rep.

How Hard Is It?

Kick-the-moon

Front and back flips are old hat.
Master the new-school acrobatic move



What it takes

- Unwavering conviction
- #failvideo-proof ego
- A rocket-powered leg swing

Difficulty rating 6/10

1 It's universal

You've probably seen all-flair-no-substance footballers show off this trick on a Saturday afternoon (unless their irate manager has banned it) but the kick-the-moon is at the core of a multitude of disciplines. It's used in gymnastics, martial arts, diving and freerunning - and it's actually "fairly simple", according to parkour practitioner and performance coach Alex Pownall (parkourgenerations.com). "It doesn't require the raw power of a standing back flip or the co-ordination of a front flip. But that doesn't mean it can't be scary."

2 The clue's in the name

The move belongs to a gymnastics move group called gainers, because you need to gain speed and harness momentum to get off the ground. The "kick" part relates to the dynamic leg swing required to get you the whole way round. "Lean forward and swing your leg like crazy," is how Pownall puts it. Power and flexibility are both vital. "If you swing one leg hard and leave the other on the ground and you're not flexible, you're going to end up ripping something." Best case scenario, your shorts. Worst case... well, you can imagine.

3 Hesitation will be your undoing

"Be fully committed to the move," advises GB's Olympic silver medal gymnast Kristian Thomas. Hesitate just a fraction and you could end up under-rotating and flop onto the floor. Approach it like you would any max lift in the weights room. "It demands 100% focus and your full attention," says Thomas. The move won't come overnight.

4 Celebrate in (free) style

Perfecting these head-spinning antics in a safe foam-padded environment - instead of on your Sunday league pitch - is advisable if you want your ego, not to mention your face, to stay intact. "Lean back on a flip of any kind and your momentum will simply swing you into the ground - hard," says Pownall. "But pull it off and the elation you feel trumps any gym PB."

BREAK IT DOWN



Run-up Gain momentum from a jog, then stretch one leg ahead of you and plant it



Take-off Swing your rear leg and arms upwards to generate vertical power



Flip Drive your hips forwards so they come up and directly over your head



Land Keep your legs bent for a controlled landing - then lap up the adulation



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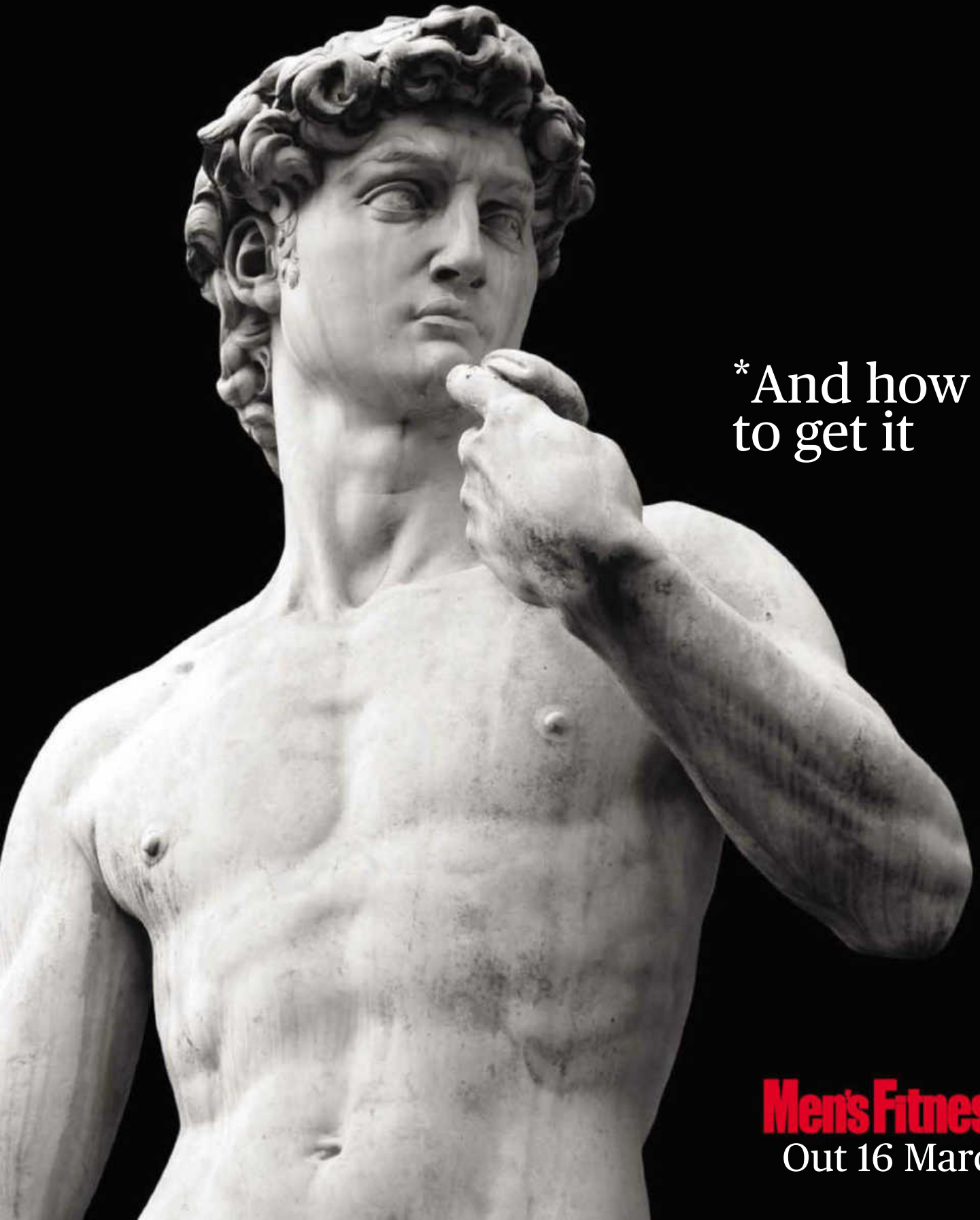
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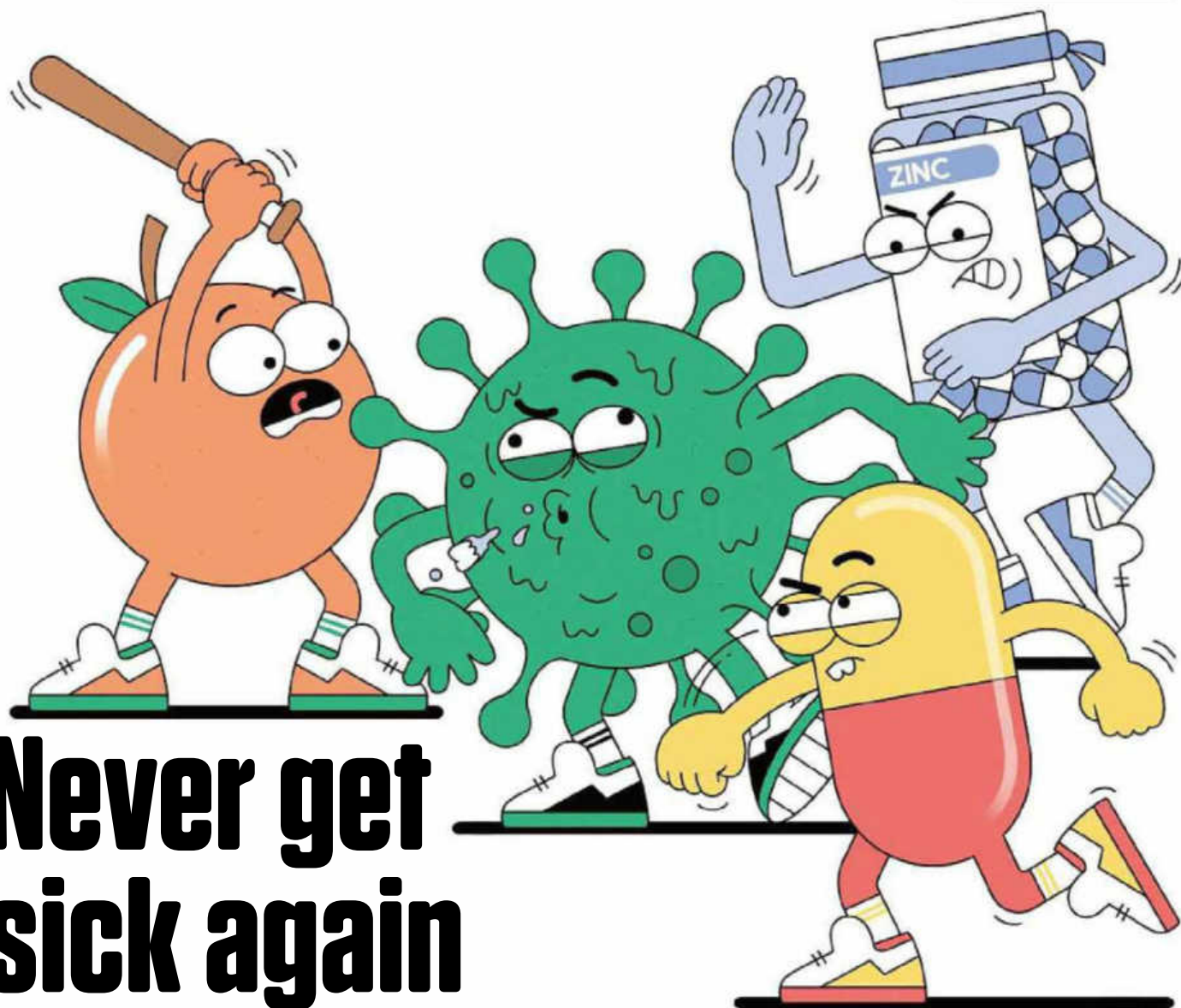
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*And how
to get it



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1 PROTECT CELLS WITH VITAMIN C

Your cells and nerves take a battering when you're ill (and when you exercise) but this antioxidant protects against cell damage and enhances recovery. "You can get it from supplements, but if you get it from fresh fruit too it'll also aid your digestive system," says nutritionist Anthony Nyman. Papaya packs the highest natural dose.

2 BEAT PAIN WITH SELENIUM

A mineral that can stop illnesses in their tracks, so you can get your training back on course. "Selenium stops infections spreading and can reduce the aches and pains that come with fevers," says Nyman. As well as supps, you can also get lots of it from brazil nuts and tuna.

3 BOOST IMMUNITY WITH VITAMIN D

An immunity-strengthening supplement for all seasons - but especially winter, because the primary source is exposure to the sun's rays. Studies show athletic performance dips in winter months so, short of a February escape to the Caribbean, tablets are an ideal solution.

4 RESTORE VIGOUR WITH ZINC

Deficiency will erode your muscle and strength - and leave gaps in your defences. "Plugging those gaps boosts your odds of fighting infections," says Nyman. "Zinc is also needed for growth, cell production and, crucially, optimum levels of testosterone." It can also aid restful sleep, so take it half an hour before bed.

5 FIGHT INFECTIONS WITH FISH OIL

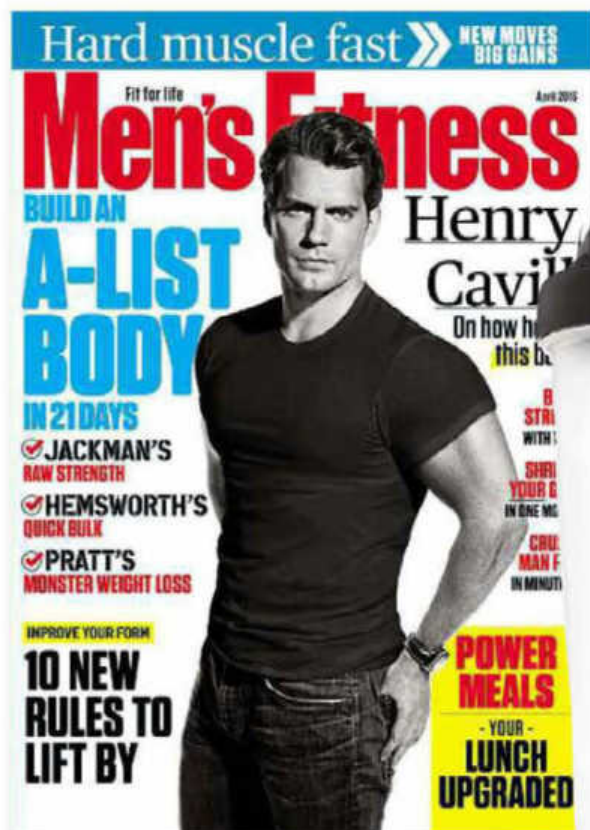
Starting to worry spring will never come? When the stress hormone cortisol rises, it's harder to fight off foreign antigens. Omega 3 fatty acids in daily fish oil capsules will help suppress cortisol when you're run down, as well as improving brain and heart health.

Anthony Nyman is a nutritional advisor and Multipower ambassador. Visit multipower.com

Can I train when I'm ill?

You can - just don't do punishing high-intensity sessions that could make things worse. Research from Indiana University showed 40 minutes of daily exercise below 70% of your maximum heart rate during a cold has no ill effects, while studies have also shown that moderate exercise can stimulate immunity and help fight infection.

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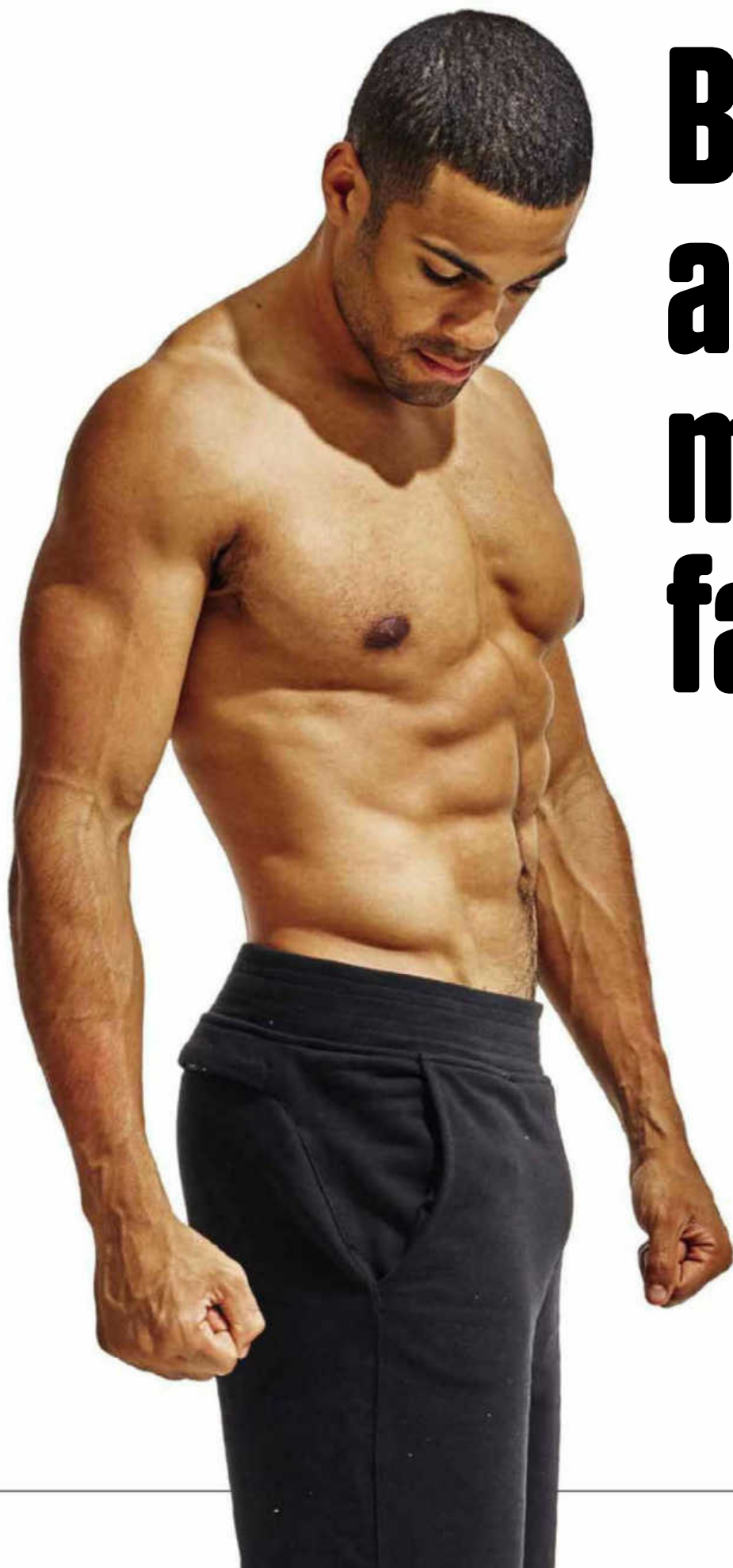
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Build athletic muscle fast

How hybrid training will make you indestructible

Looking strong, lean and powerful isn't half as

satisfying as *being* strong, lean and powerful. That's where hybrid training can give you the edge over the baseball cap-toting 1,000-curl zealots who clog up the gym floor. "This plan unites full-body compound moves, dynamic Olympic lifts and muscle-fortifying assistance exercises into a three-pronged attack on your physique," says fitness coach and model James Potter (evolvefitnessonline.co.uk) who came to our attention after winning our 2015 Optimum Nutrition workout challenge.

Here he shares the plan that got him in winning condition, including the bonus metabolic conditioning workouts that'll put your respiratory system under short spells of duress to melt away excess fat and enhance your cardiovascular endurance. The final package is a ripped, robust and athletic body that'll help you score personal bests in the gym and be ultra-fit for function, whatever the world throws at you. →

Words Sam Rider Photography Danny Bird Model Lee McLaughlin@VAtletic Clothing BAA T-shirt £18, baaclothing.com, Adidas AdiStar Boost Glow shoe, £91, adidas.co.uk



James Potter is founder of Evolve Fitness, a leading coach at Fitness First and winner of our 2015 ON Fitness Challenge.

HOW IT WORKS

Hybrid training is meant to keep you on your toes. Each of these four workouts includes either heavy lifts for strength, dynamic moves for power, high-intensity finishers or all three. Keep your workouts varied and challenging by subbing in the six training methods on p134, and use the nutritional info on p137 to help fuel your efforts.

DIRECTIONS

If you want to emulate Potter, follow this plan for eight weeks. Take at least a day's break between workouts 2 and 3 to recover. "For the big compound lifts (bench, deadlift and front squat) you should be pushing almost to failure on every set," says Potter. For the Olympic lifts (cleans), move the bar explosively. "Keep the load moderate and the movement powerful."

Workout 1

Lower-body pull

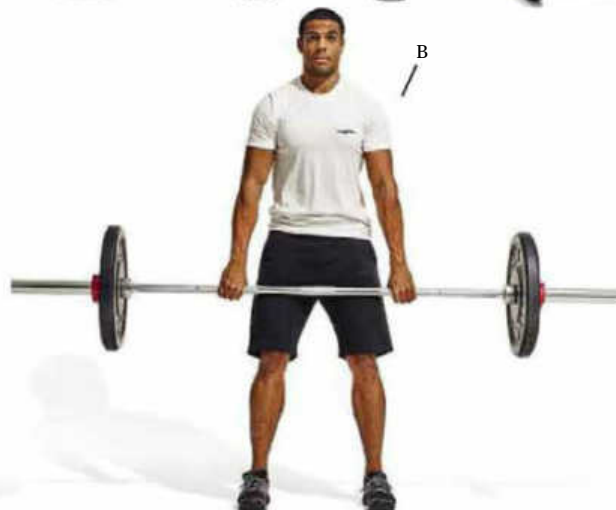
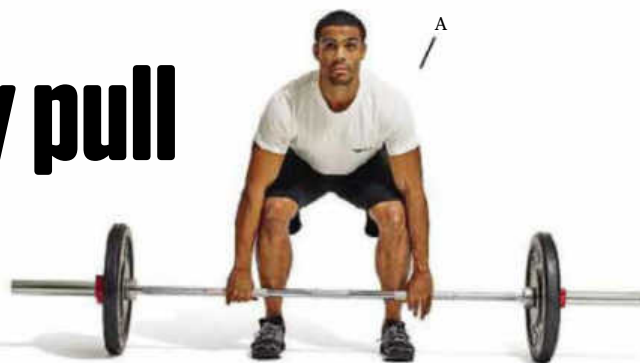
Construct your opening session around the muscle-building deadlift

1

DEADLIFT

SETS 5 REPS 5 REST 2-3 MIN

Grip the bar with your hands shoulder-width apart, with your arms straight and knees slightly bent. Keeping your chest up and your back straight, drive down through your heels and pull the bar up your legs, pushing your hips forwards to stand tall.

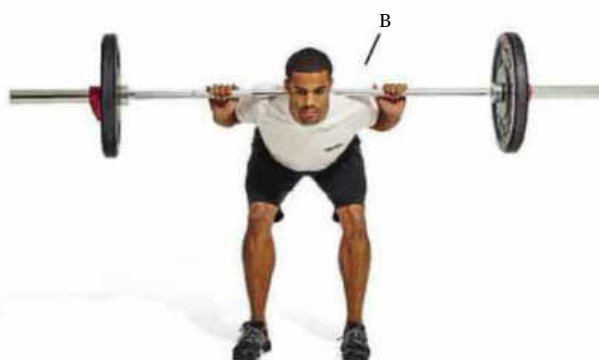


3

GOOD MORNING

SETS 4 REPS 8 REST 60-90 SEC

Stand holding a barbell on the backs of your shoulders, not your neck. Slowly bend forwards at your hips, keeping your legs and back straight. Bend until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings, then rise back to the start.



4

HOLLOW ROCK

SETS 3 TIME 30 SEC REST 60-90 SEC

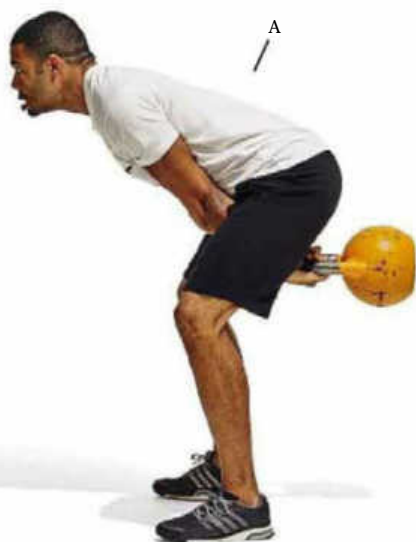
Lie on the floor with your legs and arms together. Contract your core and glutes to lift your hands and feet slightly off the floor. Holding this shape, rock forwards and backwards.



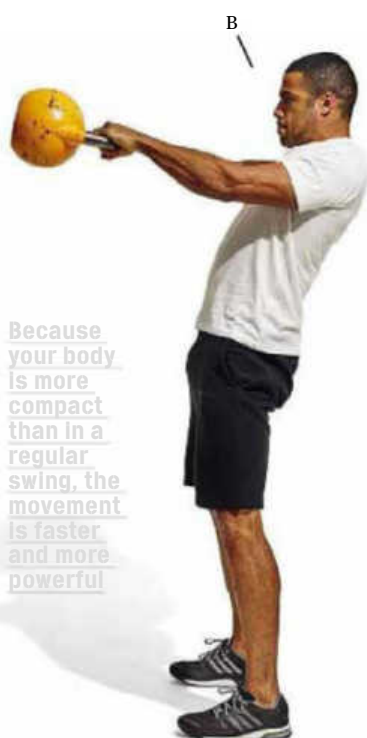
② COMPACT KETTLEBELL SWING

SETS 3 REPS 15-20 REST 60-90SEC

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your arms slightly bent and all your muscles tensed. Drive your hips forwards to push the kettlebell off your body to start the swing. As you lower, hinge at the hips by pushing your glutes back. When you feel a stretch in your hamstrings, drive your hips forward, allowing the kettlebell to rise to head height.



Because your body is more compact than in a regular swing, the movement is faster and more powerful



Workout 2

Upper-body push

Target your chest and shoulders, and spare some energy for the fat-blasting finisher



① WIDE-GRIP BENCH PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 8 REST 2-3MIN

Lie on a flat bench, holding the bar with an overhand grip, hands outside shoulder-width, your shoulder blades retracted and feet flat on the floor. Take the bar out of the rack and lower slowly until it's touching your chest, then drive straight up.



② CLOSE-GRIP BENCH PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 8 REST 60-90SEC

Reduce the weight from the previous exercise. This time hold the bar with hands less than shoulder-width apart. Take the bar out of the rack and slowly lower it to your chest, keeping your elbows tucked in to your body, then drive the weight straight up.

The triceps muscles are key here. Reduce the weight and dig in

PICK YOUR POISON

Add these training methods popularised by CrossFit to break up the monotony of body part splits

EMOM

Do a set number of reps at regular intervals on a running clock, usually every minute, on the minute. This tests your powers of recovery.

Three clean and jerks every minute for 10 minutes

AMRAP

Complete as many rounds as possible of a given exercise combination within a given time. It builds stamina and burns fat. *12 minutes of eight front squats and eight push presses*

RFT

Complete a given number of rounds of a circuit as fast as possible. Short rest periods develop long-lasting muscle endurance.

Eight rounds of 15 kettlebell swings, 10 KB clean and presses and 5 KB snatches

CHIPPER

A series of exercises, usually high reps. Complete one round for time. A high-volume, muscle building grind. *100 press-ups, 75 bodyweight squats, 50 burpees, 25 pull-ups*

LADDER

One or more movements, increasing or decreasing workload over time. Build intensity for a challenging warm-up. *1-10 reps of goblet squats alternating with 10-1 reps of pull-ups*

TABATA

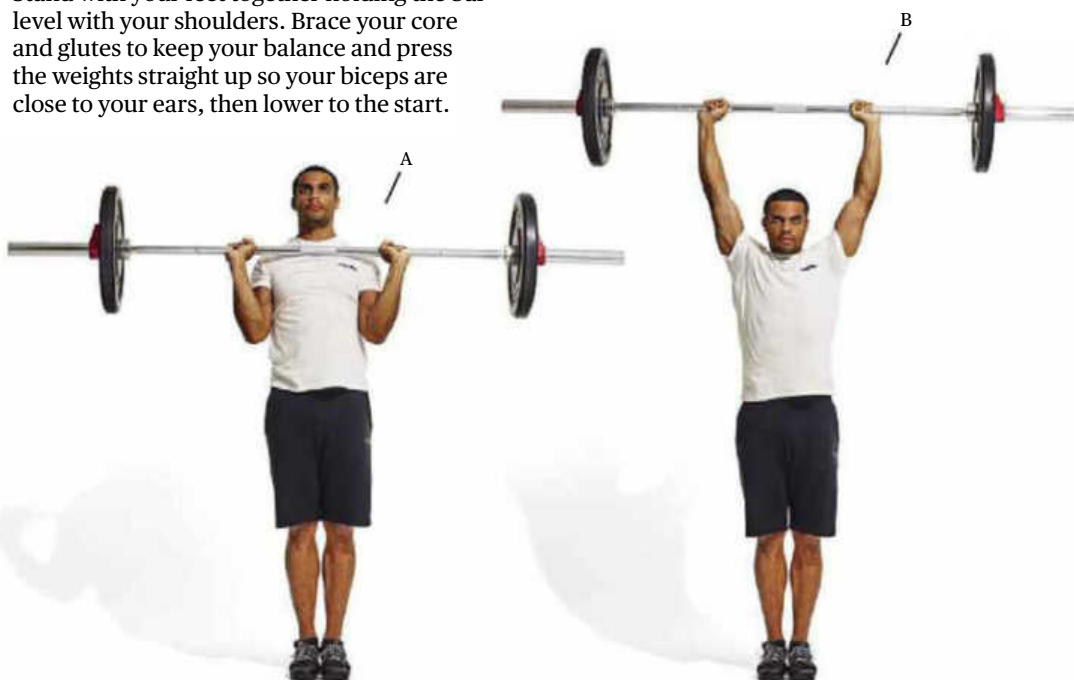
Do eight rounds of high-intensity intervals, alternating 20 seconds' effort with ten seconds' rest. A real fat-exterminating finisher. *Row for max distance*

3

MILITARY PRESS

SETS 4 REPS 8 REST 60-90SEC

Stand with your feet together holding the bar level with your shoulders. Brace your core and glutes to keep your balance and press the weights straight up so your biceps are close to your ears, then lower to the start.



4

DIPS

SETS 4 REPS 8-12 REST

60-90SEC

Grip the bars or handles with your arms locked out, and lean forward so you recruit your chest muscles. Bend your arms to lower until your chest is level with your hands, then press back up powerfully.



FINISHER 10min AMRAP

Power clean Reps 10
Burpee over bar Reps 10

Workouts 2 and 4 include finishers - in this case a 10min AMRAP, or "as many rounds as possible". These circuits build stamina and burn excess calories. Keep a score of your reps and try to beat it next time.

HANG POWER CLEAN

Hold the bar just above your knees, hinging forwards at your hips. Drive your hips forwards to generate power and use this movement to raise the bar to chest height. Quickly drop into a quarter squat and bring your arms under the bar to catch it on the top of your chest, then stand up.

BURPEE OVER BAR

Put the bar down and drop into a crouch with your hands on the floor. Jump your feet back into the top position of a press-up. Jump your feet forwards again, then jump up and over the bar. Turn and repeat in the other direction.

Workout 3

Lower-body push

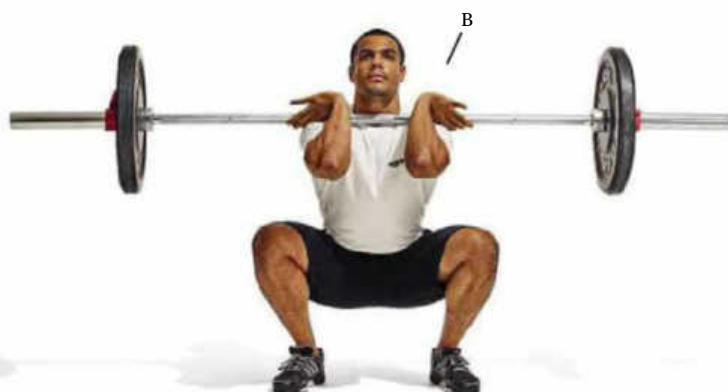
Like an adrenaline shot in the glutes, heavy squats will prep your whole body to grow

①

FRONT SQUAT

SETS 5 REPS 5 REST 2-3MIN

Rest the bar across your upper chest with your hands holding it in place and your elbows as high as you can get them. Keeping your chest up and back straight, squat down, keeping your weight on your heels. Lower until your thighs are at least parallel to the ground, making sure your knees stay wide apart, then drive back up.

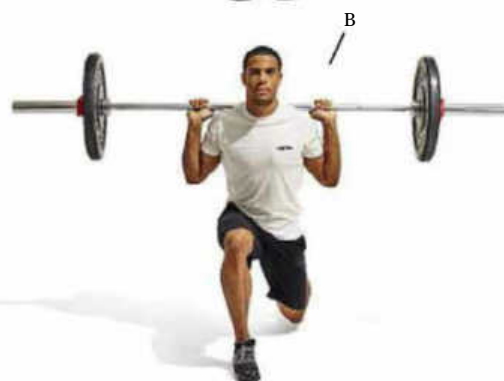


②

BARBELL LUNGE

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 2-3MIN

Use a light barbell. Holding the bar across your shoulders, take a big step forwards, making sure you're balanced, and lower your back knee until it's just off the floor. Keep your back upright and your front knee in line with your front foot. Return to the start and keep alternating legs.



③

BENCH PISTOL SQUAT

SETS 3 REPS 6 EACH SIDE

REST 60-90SEC

On a stable bench or box, stand on one leg, with the other extended in front of you. Bend your standing leg to lower into a single-leg squat, then press back up to stand.



A lack of flexibility in the hamstrings is usually the pistol squatter's downfall. This gives you more leg room



④

TURKISH GET-UP

SETS 3 REPS 3 EACH SIDE REST 60-90SEC

Lie holding the kettlebell in one hand straight above you. Keep your eyes on the weight and shoulder strong as you contract your abs to sit up, resting on your other hand. Bring your straightened leg back so you're kneeling, then straighten up and stand.



Workout 4 Upper-body pull

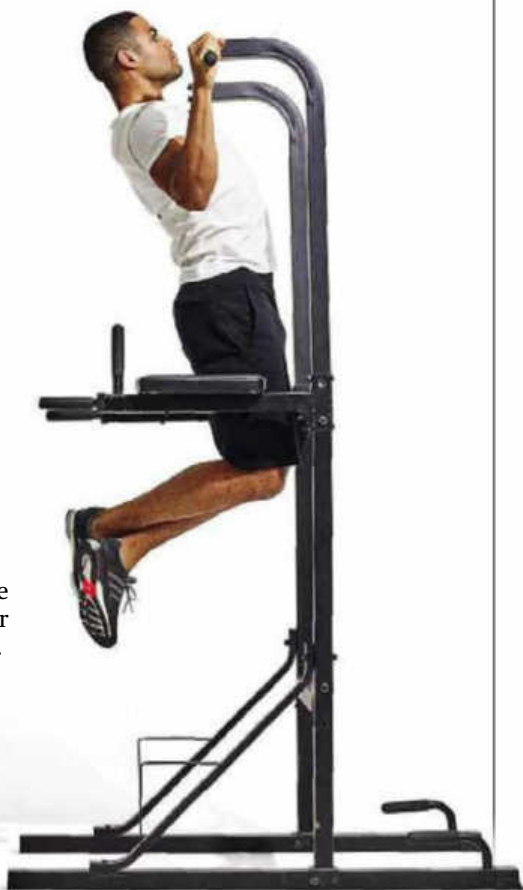
The large muscles in your back join the party before another dynamic finisher rounds off your week

②

PULL-UP

SETS 4 REPS 10 REST 60-90SEC

Grasp the bar with an overhand grip. Retract your shoulder blades to engage the muscles in your upper back. Brace your core and pull yourself up until your chin is over the bar, then lower under control.

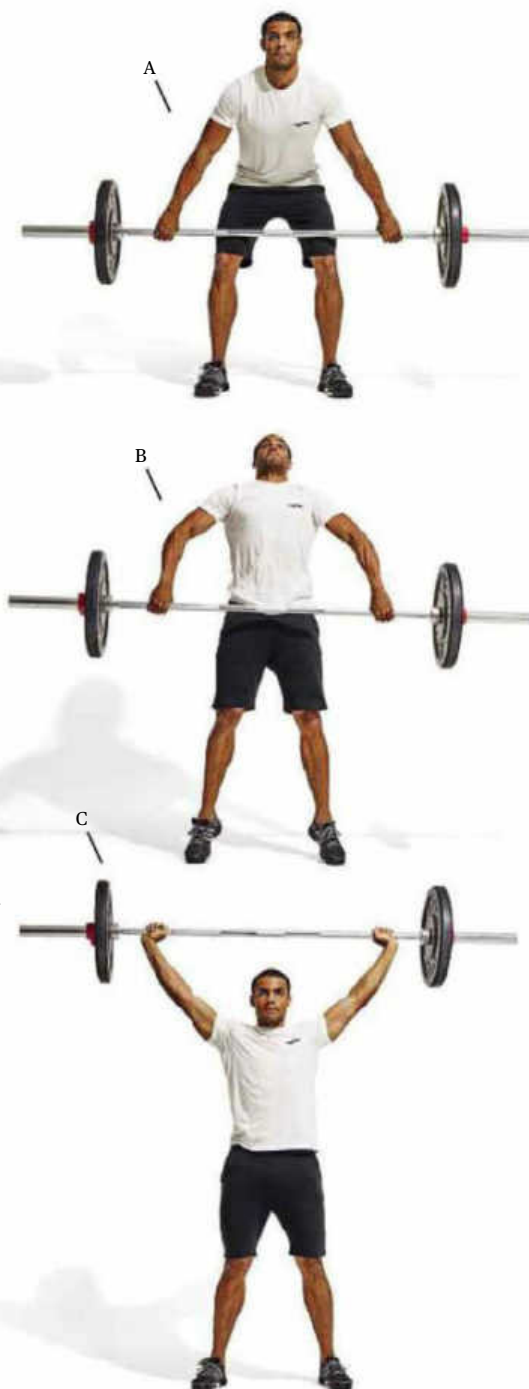


①

POWER SNATCH

SETS 3 REPS 3 REST 2-3MIN

Hold the bar just above your knees, hinging at the hips. Then drive your hips forwards to generate power and use this movement to raise the bar above your head, keeping it close to your body. Quickly drop into a quarter squat so you don't have to lift it as high, lock out your shoulders and stand.

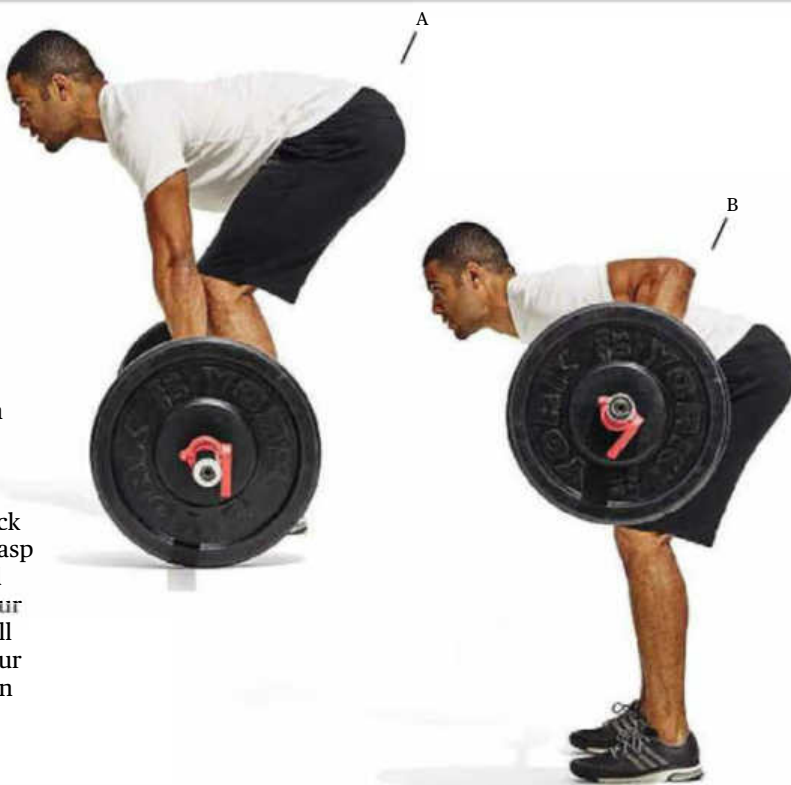


3

PENDLAY ROW

SETS 4 REPS 10 REST 60-90SEC

With the bar on the floor, bend your knees slightly and hinge forward from the hips, keeping your back slightly concave and your shoulder blades back throughout, and grasp it with an overhand grip just outside your legs. Powerfully pull the weight up to your lower sternum, then lower it back to the floor and repeat.

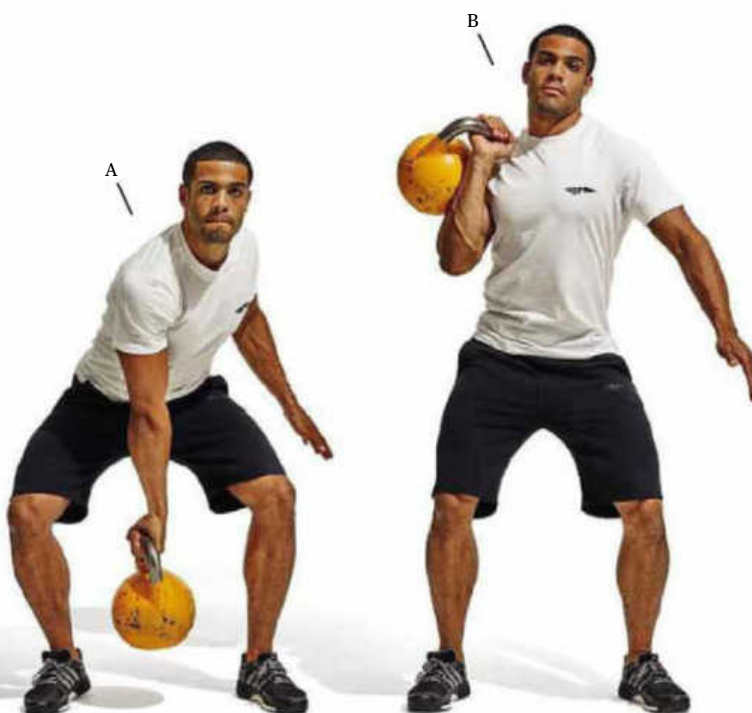


4

KETTLEBELL CLEAN AND PRESS

SETS 3 REPS 10 REST 60-90SEC

Hold a kettlebell between your legs. Drive your hips forwards to push the kettlebell off your body like you would with a swing. As the weight rises, rotate your wrist so your palm faces up and catch the kettlebell on your shoulder. From here, press the kettlebell overhead, driving with your legs if you need extra momentum. Reverse the weight to the start.



FINISHER 3 RFT

Thruster Reps 21/15/9

Jump over bench Reps 21/15/9

Do 21 thrusters, then 21 reps jumping over the bench. Next do 15 reps of each, then nine. Race the clock and rest as needed.

THRUSTER

Hold the bar level with the top of your chest and your elbows high. Keeping your chest up and back straight, squat down. Lower until your thighs are at least horizontal, keeping your knees wide apart, then drive back up and press the weight overhead.

JUMP OVER BENCH

Stand facing a knee-high bench. Jump over it, using your arms to generate momentum and bending your knees to soften your landing. Turn and repeat in the other direction.

CARBS: BACK ON THE MENU

"Carbs don't make you fat - overeating does," says Potter. And you'll need them to get through these workouts. Follow these rules to use them the right way

GLYCAEMIC INDEX

GI is a measure of how foods affect blood sugar levels. Breaking down starch-containing foods by processing tends to raise their GI value. White bread, rice, pasta and even flour spike your insulin levels, which determines how much sugar is stored as fat or used for energy.

LOW GI

Eat low-GI carbs most of the time to keep insulin levels, energy and hunger under control

PORRIDGE

Eat for breakfast for slow release energy

SWEET POTATO

A lunchtime energy pick-me-up without the afternoon slump

BROWN PASTA

Go wholegrain for the extra digestion-aiding fibre hit

HIGH GI

Eat these after training to shuttle amino acids and glycogen to your muscles for recovery

BREAD

Stick to wholegrain and seeded varieties

WHITE RICE/POTATO

Indulge after exercise for fast-acting recovery

WHITE PASTA

Tuck in after your most draining workouts

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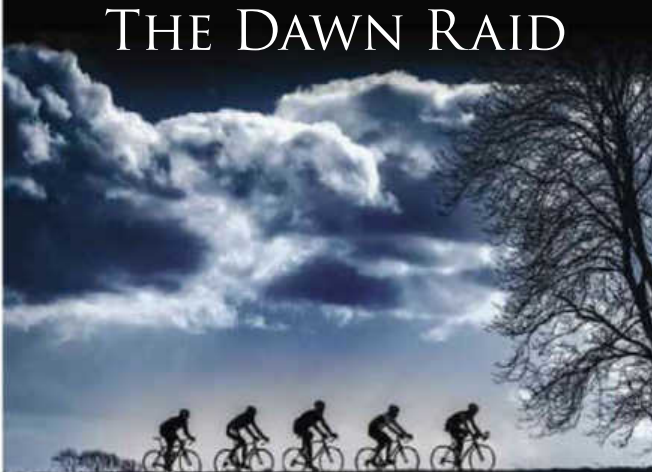
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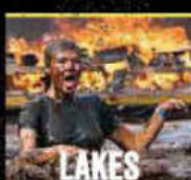
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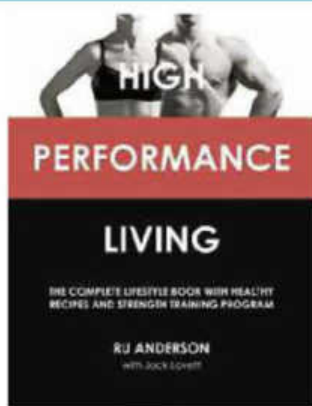
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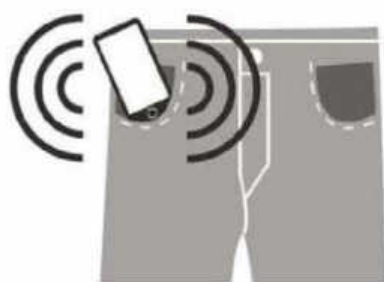
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Interesting person

Average day



Eric Underwood

The 31-year-old lead male ballet soloist for The Royal Ballet Company talks us through what a performance day looks like

My day is really regimented. I need to plan my daily routine carefully so I can have a late night without feeling drained. Breakfast is always a banana and porridge.

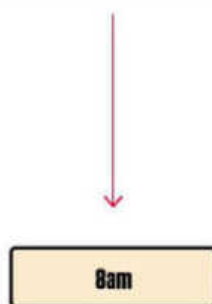


Keep it light - dancing when you feel bloated is awful. I cook my own food so I'm in control. Today was chicken and couscous.



I'll have a nap or listen to music. I'm currently into The Weeknd and Drake. I don't listen to ballet music in my off time.

I always run 3km home after a show, which takes about 12 minutes. It lets me unwind. When I get home I have a glass of wine and watch some trashy reality TV. Then I'll have a steak or a cheeseburger.



It's vital to loosen up after a night's sleep. This is a move everyone should do: stand with your back to the wall, then lower yourself slowly one vertebra at a time - as if peeling your spine away from the wall - until you can't go any further. Reverse the move to stand up.



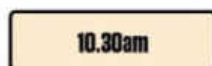
8am

Wake up



9.30am

Pilates



10.30am

Technique time



11.45am

Lunch break



12pm

Rehearsal



5.30pm

Unwind



7.30pm

Show time



10.30pm

Run home



I perfect ballet technique now, so on in rehearsals I can focus on my character later. It's exhausting and there's no room for mistakes. If something doesn't go well I'll take a video home and research it. You have to be confident when you're on stage.

I'm currently the Lead Arabian in *The Nutcracker*, a sensual character with gentle, measured movements. When I was Tybalt in *Romeo And Juliet*, I'd lean forward to emphasise his aggression.

I remove myself psychologically from pressure. I try to become the character I'm playing so that "Eric" isn't nervous or confident because "Eric" isn't there. For me that works really well.



Words Matt Huckle

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